

Langford Village Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number130962Local AuthorityOxfordshireInspection number360176

Inspection dates 18–19 October 2010

Reporting inspector Keith Sadler

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school Primary

School category Community

Age range of pupils 3-11

Gender of pupils Mixed

Number of pupils on the school roll 504

Appropriate authority The governing body

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Twenty-four lessons were seen and 16 teachers and practitioners were observed. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, parents, carers, and groups of pupils. The school's work and a wide range of documentation were reviewed. This included the school's analysis of pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, the school improvement plan, leaders' monitoring records and pupils' work. Questionnaires from staff and pupils and from 174 parents and carers were analysed and their responses taken into account.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Are pupils in Years 3 to 6 progressing well enough in their learning and are Year 6 pupils on track to meet their targets?
- Is writing taught well?
- What role does the governing body play in the school's monitoring and evaluation processes?

Information about the school

Langford is a large and over-subscribed primary school serving the Langford Village estate on the outskirts of Bicester. Most pupils are of White British heritage and there are a few from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. Although only a few pupils speak English as an additional language, these numbers are increasing. Most of those at an early stage of learning English are in either the Nursery or Reception classes. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is about half the national average. Most of these pupils have learning difficulties. Very few pupils are known to be eligible to receive free school meals. The school has gained a number of awards including Healthy School and the sports Activemark.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, Nursery children are enrolled on a part-time basis and they share a large unit with the two Reception classes. There is an on-site pre-school, 'Cygnets', which is not managed by the governing body and is subject to a separate inspection report. The school provides a breakfast club and after-school care. This is managed by the governing body and is included in this report.

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It has a number of good features, including the good quality of the teaching and the curriculum, and also some aspects that need to improve. Pupils enjoy school and they appreciate the strong family ethos which helps to promote their confidence and self-esteem effectively. This is the result of the good provision for pupils' care, guidance and support. Behaviour is good both in lessons and around the school, with older pupils showing care and consideration for younger ones. Attendance rates are high. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and, by the time that they reach Year 6, they develop into mature and responsible young people who are appropriately prepared for their move to secondary school. Most parents and carers are happy with their children's experience at the school and almost all say that their children enjoy school.

Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. They make good progress in both the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. This results in attainment at the end of Year 2 being above average. Progress slows in Years 3 to 6 to satisfactory levels. The strong emphasis that is placed on raising achievement in these year groups is starting to make an impact on attainment. Progress and learning is slower in Years 3 to 6 because teaching has not been as effective as that in Years 1 and 2. However, weaknesses are being overcome as teaching is becoming stronger, and this is having a positive benefit on learning. Inspection findings show that pupils make good progress in most lessons. However, over time, progress is satisfactory as previous underachievement is affecting overall progress. In English, progress is good in reading, but in writing, learning is hampered because teaching does not focus sufficiently on the development of pupils' grammar and punctuation which is weak. In mathematics, pupils' mental calculation skills are not sufficiently strong and this slows their learning. Senior leaders are keenly aware that learning has not yet been consolidated sufficiently to ensure that improvements are fully secure. Other positive factors are also influencing the strengthening of learning. There have, for example, been recent changes in the arrangements to track pupils' attainment and to review each pupil's progress. This means that any pupil who is in danger of slipping behind their expected progress is identified early and good programmes of support are being put in place. Furthermore, good and robust systems for monitoring teaching and learning are paying dividends because pupils' needs are clearly identified and support provided.

The large majority of teaching and learning observed by inspectors was good with some that was outstanding. A few lessons, all of which were in Years 3 to 6, were satisfactory. In all lessons, teachers manage pupils well and create a calm and purposeful atmosphere. However, when lessons are satisfactory rather than good or outstanding, assessments are not used sufficiently well to ensure that activities are challenging for all groups of pupils, particularly the more-able, and the pace of learning slows. Furthermore, too little

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emphasis is placed on ensuring pupils are clear about their learning targets. Pupils benefit from a well-organised curriculum that builds successfully on their interests and is planned to ensure that there are many opportunities for different subjects to be linked together. Pupils are rightly pleased with the wide range of enrichment opportunities, such as afterschool clubs and educational visits.

The headteacher is much admired by the school community and he has ensured that there is strong teamwork amongst the staff. There is a clear vision and a commitment to the school's improvement that is shared by staff and governors. There are good procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's provision and pupils' learning, and this leads to a well-conceived improvement plan that provides a helpful tool for development. This ensures that the school's capacity to improve further is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Consolidate recent improvements in pupils' progress and raise attainment by the end of Year 6 by:
 - sharpening pupils' mental calculation skills
 - improving pupils' writing skills by strengthening their grammar and punctuation.
- Increase the proportion of teaching that is consistently good or better, particularly in Years 3 to 6, by:
 - ensuring that work set is consistently challenging for all groups of pupils, particularly those of higher ability
 - making sure that the pace of learning is brisk
 - making pupils more aware of their longer-term targets and what they have to do to achieve them.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enter Year 1 with attainment that is generally above average, though writing skills are below average. Good progress in Years 1 and 2 ensures that attainment is above average at the end of Year 2. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is accelerating particularly in reading, though in writing it is slower. Currently, pupils learn well, though attainment is limited to average levels because of a history of some underachievement. Nonetheless, evidence from lessons, pupils' books and the school's assessment records shows that that current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach their targets, most being predicted to attain at above-average levels. A minority of the current Year 6 pupils are already working at the higher level and this marks a significant improvement from previous years' attainment. However, in a few lessons in Key Stage 2, progress remains slow for some pupils for whom the work set is not carefully matched to their ability. Due to the good support provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, these pupils make good progress towards their individual targets.

Pupils' enjoyment of school is exemplified by their high levels of attendance, positive attitudes in lessons and their willingness to cooperate. Their moral and social development is particularly good. For example, when discussing a visit to the 'forest school', even the youngest pupils showed understanding of threats to our environment. The Healthy School

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and Activemark awards reflect the way the school successfully encourages pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils enjoy taking on a range of responsibilities such as being members of the influential school council, supporting younger or more vulnerable pupils, and raising money to support local children's charities. Year 6 pupils are particularly proud of their 'business club' in which they are to sell recycled stationery in school. Pupils say they feel safe in school and appreciate the steps taken by adults to look after them. Parents and carers agree, as shown in the comment, 'Our children are kept very safe at school. The school is large, but it is managed in such a way that it doesn't feel large and intimidating to the children.'

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning			
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3		
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress			
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress			
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2		
Pupils' behaviour			
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles			
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2		
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3		
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance 1	1		
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2		

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The large majority of lessons are of good quality. Recent improvements in the quality of teaching are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 in particular. Pupils' learning is supported strongly by their positive and mature attitudes which are developed well by teachers who take many opportunities to provide paired and collaborative learning tasks. Good learning is achieved consistently in most lessons when pupils are motivated and enthused at the prospect of a challenge. An example of this was seen in an outstanding Year 2 lesson when the pupils were delighted when testing each other about how they were partitioning two digit numbers to double them. 'I've really got this,' proudly announced one successful pupil. Learning is aided by very good marking of

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

pupils' work. Lesson objectives are made clear in books, and teachers provide detailed comments about the pupils' work. There are many examples of pupils being actively engaged in reflecting on their learning or responding to teachers' comments. However, pupils are not always clear about their longer-term targets in literacy and numeracy, and what they need to do to reach them. This limits the use of assessment to support learning to satisfactory levels.

Pupils are well known by the adults and are treated as individuals, which is a feature of the good levels of care, guidance and support provided. A further positive feature is the way that the school successfully nurtures pupils who are potentially vulnerable. There is structured support for families, and also play therapy for those that have emotional and behavioural difficulties. This provision helps to remove potential barriers to learning. In addition, parents and carers appreciate the good quality before- and after-school clubs that operate for rather longer than is normally found.

The school provides an attractive learning environment which fully reflects the broad curriculum. Topics are carefully chosen to interest and engage the pupils, and to draw on many subject areas. Year 5, for example, when studying Britain in the 1930s, thoroughly enjoyed a dance session in which they were learning to waltz! The school has recently amended the curriculum to ensure that more time is allocated to the teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy in Years 3 to 6, and there are indications that this is already paying dividends.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2	
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3	
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships		
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2	

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a strong commitment to meeting the needs of pupils and, despite the large size of the school, he knows them as individuals. Since the last inspection, he has brought more rigour and accountability to teaching and learning by strengthening tracking procedures, ensuring that teaching and learning are closely monitored, and by developing the leadership and management skills of staff and governors. He is supported well by senior staff and subject leaders. Nonetheless, the school's drive for improvement is satisfactory rather than good because it is only recently that learning in Years 3 to 6 is beginning to match the good progress seen in Years 1 and 2, and it is too early for the school to have fully tackled the legacy of previous underachievement.

Governance is good. Governors ensure that they fulfil their role to both support and to provide challenge for the staff. There are good procedures in place for them to check provision and learning, and these are currently being boosted by the introduction of 'monitoring mates' which are intended to further enhance their links with staff.

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Pupils' safety and welfare is central to the school's work and all safeguarding arrangements are robustly implemented and constantly reviewed. In many respects, the school works effectively to promote equal opportunities. Discrimination is not tolerated, and its inclusive philosophy is reflected in the strong support that is employed to meet the needs of potentially vulnerable pupils, several of whom have transferred into the school from other schools. Nonetheless, differences in progress and learning, together with the lack of opportunities for more-able pupils in particular to attain above-average levels, limits the promotion of equality of opportunity to satisfactory.

The school provides a cohesive community, and there are effective partnership links with other local schools, and also with parents and carers. In addition, good links are established with the local community, and also with a school in Uganda. Displays of this school and its work enrich the lives of Langford pupils and help them to develop an understanding of other communities. However, the school rightly recognises that there is a need to strengthen pupils' understanding of different communities in the United Kingdom, and plans to develop a link with a school in Oxford that serves a different community are well founded.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement		
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2	
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2	
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2	
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2	
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3	
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2	
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion		
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3	

Early Years Foundation Stage

Effective induction arrangements enable children to settle quickly into the Nursery. This is aided by the close links with the on-site pre-school provision. Consequently, even though they have only been in school for a few weeks, these children are already confident and secure, and have a good understanding of routines and where they can learn and play together. Their personal well-being is aided by the caring nature of the adults, and also because Reception-age children take pride in looking after younger children.

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Attainment on entry to the Nursery is broadly in line with typical expectations. Children learn well because teaching is good. Their days are successfully divided between doing activities with their own key worker and also learning through play with older children with the support of teachers or key workers. An increasing number of children who are at an early stage of learning English enter either the Nursery or Reception classes. These children are supported well and quickly integrate with other children as they are helped to learn the social routines of the unit and also successfully develop their language skills. Children make good progress in most areas of learning. However, even though children's language and reading skills are successfully developed, progress in communication, language and literacy is slower because writing skills are not as well developed. This aspect of the curriculum is being reviewed and strengthened.

Systematic planning ensures that there is a coherent balance of experiences across all areas of learning. This is aided by the regular movement of the teachers and key persons from one area to another. Arrangements to assess the children are good, though rather cumbersome. This is partly due to the large number of adults and children and also to the very comprehensive recordings taken. Nonetheless, the children's 'learning journey' record provides a comprehensive and helpful picture of progress. The class work closely as a team, and good leadership ensures that morale is high and staff are united in ensuring that children thoroughly enjoy school and achieve well.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage		
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2	
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2	
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2	

Views of parents and carers

Even though the very large majority of parents and carers are happy with their children's experiences at the school, and almost all say that their children enjoy school and the school helps them to have a healthy lifestyle, some concerns were expressed. Largest amongst these was the very small minority that said that the school does not inform parents and carers well enough about their children's progress. Two lesser concerns relate to the school's dealing with unacceptable behaviour and the account that the school takes of parents' and carers' suggestions. These three areas were investigated as part of the inspection. The school's procedures to inform parents and carers about pupils' progress were found to be good. As well as regular newsletters, detailed summarised annual reports and formal opportunities to meet with staff, informal opportunities are available and were observed by inspectors at the start of the school day. The school's procedures to deal with any unacceptable behaviour are good. There is a robust behaviour policy which operates successfully in practice. Although there are a few pupils who have particular emotional and behavioural needs, these pupils are managed successfully. Good partnerships with parents and carers, and also good communication channels with

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

governors, ensure that parents' and carers' views are taken into account. The school is to review these procedures in order to further address these concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Langford Village Community School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 174 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 504 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	88	51	84	48	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	88	51	78	45	7	4	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	40	23	96	55	26	15	3	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	49	28	100	57	12	7	4	2
The teaching is good at this school	60	34	95	55	6	3	3	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	62	36	97	56	8	5	4	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	26	121	70	4	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	51	29	96	55	8	5	3	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	56	32	96	55	9	5	5	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	22	102	59	18	10	5	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	43	25	92	53	17	10	6	3
The school is led and managed effectively	59	34	94	54	8	5	5	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	73	42	89	51	5	3	3	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)						
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate			
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2			
Primary schools	8	43	40	9			
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13			
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3			
Special schools	33	42	20	4			
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12			
All schools	11	42	38	9			

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and	l success of	a pupil	in their	learning,
	development or	training.			

Attainment: the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and

examination results and in lessons.

Capacity to improve: the proven ability of the school to continue

improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality

of its systems to maintain improvement.

Leadership and management: the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities,

not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.

Learning: how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their

understanding, learn and practise skills and are

developing their competence as learners.

Overall effectiveness: inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall

effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness

judgement will be.

■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.

- Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.
- The quality of teaching.
- The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.
- The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.

Progress: the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and

over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key

stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



21 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Langford Village Community School, Bicester OX26 6SX

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for your help when we came to visit your school and also to tell you what we found. We enjoyed our visit and we were pleased to see how you enjoy school. We realised this when we saw that your attendance is outstanding!

Yours is a satisfactory school, which means that some things are done well and other things could be improved. You told us that you enjoy learning. Your behaviour is good and you have positive attitudes that help you in your learning. Your parents and carers told us that you are happy and feel safe, and we agree with them. You have a good understanding about being healthy. Your teachers work hard to make lessons interesting for you, and most lessons are good and you now learn well. You told us that you enjoy all the trips and visits that the school organises, particularly your residential visits. These things help to make sure that you enjoy learning. The staff look after you well and take good care of you.

We have asked your headteacher and staff to take some action to make sure that improvements continue. We want you to improve your grammar and punctuation skills in writing, and to make sure that your mental calculation skills in numeracy are also improved. We have also asked your headteacher to make sure that all your lessons are of at least good quality. To do this, we have suggested that your teachers make sure that the work that they set for you is challenging, particularly for those of you that find learning easy, and also that your teachers make sure that you learn quickly. We have also asked the staff to make sure that you know and understand your targets for literacy and numeracy.

We hope that all of you continue to enjoy school and learning.

Yours sincerely

Keith Sadler

Lead inspector

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