

Larwood School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131503
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	360280
Inspection dates	21–22 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Lucie Calow

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

The inspection of social care was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	63
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sandra Barr
Headteacher	Alan Whitaker
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2008
School address	Webb Rise Stevenage SG1 5QU
Telephone number	01438 236333
Fax number	01438 236363
Email address	admin@larwood.herts.sch.uk

Age group	5–11
Inspection dates	21–22 June 2011
Inspection number	360280

Boarding provision

Social care Unique Reference Number SC056394
Social care inspector Mary Timms

Age group 5–11
Inspection dates 21–22 June 2011
Inspection number 360280

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors and one social care Inspector. Eight lessons were observed, during which the same number of teachers were seen. A walk around all classrooms was undertaken. Meetings were held with senior leaders and managers, a small group of parents and carers, pupils and governors. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including school policies, safeguarding arrangements and pupil achievement data. The inspection team analysed 38 inspection questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 12 questionnaires relating to boarding provision, 40 relating to education returned by pupils and 28 inspection questionnaires returned by staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How much progress do students make academically and in their social, emotional and behavioural development?
- How is information about students' prior learning used to plan and deliver effective lessons?
- How effective are leaders and managers in identifying the school's strengths and bringing about improvements?
- How is 'time out' in the designated rooms used in the school, and how well is the practice monitored as part of the school's safeguarding systems?

Information about the school

Larwood is a larger than average special school for pupils who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. A small minority have additional needs such as autistic spectrum disorder and the great majority of pupils are boys. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Numbers in each year group vary widely. The school provides 25 weekly boarding places and currently, only boys are boarding. Many pupils join or leave the school at times other than at the start of a key stage or year group although once they have arrived, most stay until secondary transfer. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Most pupils are of White British heritage, and a few are of Black British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The school has achieved a number of awards including an Eco-School award, Healthy School status and the Active Sports mark.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the inappropriate way in which the school manages pupils' behaviour, and in particular the practice of seclusion in the 'time out' rooms.

The large majority of pupils at Larwood have experienced 'time out' during this academic year and the rooms identified for this are in very frequent use. 'Time out' is a key component of the school's behaviour management system and pupils are keenly aware of it. The way in which this procedure is used to manage behaviour is inappropriate and constitutes a serious breach of safeguarding requirements. The school's detailed logs indicate that some pupils experience 'time out' frequently and some experience it for considerable periods of time. The school has a specific 'time out' policy which is linked to the behaviour management policy. However, neither policy adequately covers the system of seclusion as it is currently practised, and as a result, there is a significant gap between policy and practice. The school's monitoring of the use of 'time out' is not sufficient to ensure that teachers only use the rooms when it is absolutely necessary.

The school's capacity to improve is inadequate. The school's current self-evaluation is over generous. The school is aware that pupils' safeguarding is compromised by poor visibility into the time out rooms and has not adequately resolved this. Responses to parent and carer and pupil survey findings have been too limited. The use of 'time out' has, following recent social care inspections, been discontinued in the residential setting, but the school has not updated its policies to match. A misalignment now exists in behaviour management between practice in the main school and for boarders.

Behaviour management in other respects, however, is better. Staff give high levels of praise and encouragement to which pupils respond well. Attendance is above average as pupils learn to engage with school again. Teaching is satisfactory overall and some teaching observed was good or better. In the best lessons pupils are enthusiastically engaged in motivating activities and respond with excellent behaviour and accelerated learning. Effective use of 'time away' within the class for a few minutes results in pupils returning to activities and resuming learning quickly. The 'points' system leading to praise and recognition is also effective; it is clear and well structured. In weaker lessons the pace of learning is slow, pupils' attention wanders and behaviour quickly deteriorates. The curriculum is good. It is designed to engage pupils through interesting and enjoyable activities and to improve their basic skills. The school has established good partnerships with parents and with agencies and organisations to support pupils' learning and promote their well-being.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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

Some aspects of safeguarding and of the care, guidance and support provided for pupils are satisfactory. For example, the grounds are secure and systems for safe staff recruitment and the maintenance of the single central register are in place. Staff know their pupils very well and this is a key component, both of parents' favourable views of the school and of the amount of success behaviour management can have in class. However, overall, care, guidance, support and safeguarding procedures are inadequate because the school has not addressed its wider duties in terms of the use of the 'time out' rooms.

Governance is inadequate. Systems for introducing, reviewing and updating policies are weak. Some, therefore, fall behind the timeframes set. Practice is not always underpinned by up-to-date policies, and the extent to which formally agreed policies have been adopted lacks clarity. The governing body has not held the school sufficiently accountable in its recent review of behaviour management. Nevertheless, governors are frequent and committed visitors to the school. They attend many events and several have given their service for a considerable period of time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve safeguarding procedures and the management of challenging behaviours by:
 - immediately ceasing the routine practice of seclusion in the time out rooms except in the exceptional circumstances which might be permitted under current guidelines
 - reducing the need for the removal of pupils from lessons by ensuring that all staff are provided with the strategies they need to manage the behaviour of individuals effectively in class
 - updating all existing policies and procedures relating to behaviour management in line with current statutory guidance, establishing any further policies required, and ensuring practice matches them closely
 - ensuring that all practices for managing pupils behaviour are safe.
- Improve the effectiveness of the governing body by:
 - ensuring that governors always have a wide ranging set of relevant information to be able to offer support and challenge to the school in decision making
 - ensuring that all key policies are in place with timely and effective reviews.
- Increase the amount of good and better teaching and learning through robust systems of monitoring and support.
- The school must ensure that it meets those national minimum standards for boarding which have not been met.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Pupils often join the school with a history of low achievement, attendance and engagement. Many pupils enter Key Stage 2 with attainment which is below the national average. Pupils make satisfactory progress. Targets for pupils' attainment are set shortly after admission and progress towards them is carefully tracked. Targets are reviewed annually. The school's data indicate that an increasing proportion of pupils make good

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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

progress towards their individual targets. The school's systems allow staff to identify those who do not do as well as expected, analyse the reasons why and put in additional interventions and support as necessary to improve progress. The school's analysis of data indicates no significant variations in attainment and progress associated with different groups of pupils, for example those who have autistic spectrum disorder, boys, girls or those of different ethnic heritages.

Most pupils who returned a questionnaire agreed that they feel safe at school and the vast majority said that adults in the school care for them. Pupils who access boarding feel especially safe and well cared for. However, pupils raised the issues of their own behaviour and that of their peers and the use of 'time out' with inspectors. They report that 'time out' sometimes increases their feelings of anger and vulnerability. In line with pupils' comments, the inspection found that behaviour is a cause for concern.

The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles is good and many strands are particularly impressive. For example, meal preparation on-site using fresh ingredients, and the manner in which lunchtimes are conducted, foster an excellent attitude to meal times. The school provides a very good range of activities and sports which the pupils enjoy, and are reflected in the Active Sports mark award. Parents and carers particularly enjoy the events that the school hosts, such as the gym and dance displays.

Pupils' attendance is above the average for mainstream primary schools and many quickly establish a pattern of high attendance even though they have entered the school part-way through a year or key stage with a history of exclusion, risk of exclusion or non-attendance. Parents and carers are particularly appreciative of the difference this makes to their children's progress and of the personal support they receive to achieve the improvement. The large majority of pupils say they enjoy school, despite their concerns about behaviour and 'time out', and they are keen to make a contribution to it. This can be seen by the active school council and their participation in sports and special events such as school productions. Pupils speak very highly of their experience of boarding and the care they are offered, and told the inspectors that 'boarding is fun.'

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory and is promoted through the curriculum and various enrichment activities, leading to some awards. Although there are a significant number of behavioural incidents, few are identified as bullying and incidents of racist behaviour are very rare. Pupils generally get on well together and this is encouraged through use of 'buddy benches' in both playgrounds

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	4
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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 curriculum is well organised, imaginative and offers a wide range of enrichment opportunities. Overall there is a good balance between formal lessons and fun activities which motivate the pupils to re-engage with education in a very positive way. The arts award work has brought a particular creativity to the curriculum. Friday activities, such as rugby, sailing and circus skills, make a particularly good contribution to keeping pupils engaged and healthy.

Some aspects of care, guidance and support are well-developed and this is particularly evident in the links between the boarding and school provision. Inspectors observed examples of high levels of support given to individual pupils and parents and carers, such as home visits and making boarding available to families with urgent needs. Systems for celebrating success are well established, understood and valued by the pupils. However, support, care and guidance are inadequate overall because the risk assessments for the use of seclusion in the 'time out' rooms are inadequate. The system does not allow for modifications to meet individuals' particular needs. In practice, such modifications may be made by individual staff members, but this is not done formally or robustly enough, or monitored.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Some teaching is good and outstanding. At its best, teaching is built on interesting and creative activities derived from the well-established curriculum. Some teachers are skilful at engaging and challenging pupils. Behaviour

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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

management in these lessons ensures that any undesirable behaviour is swiftly resolved and pupils return to class. Similarly, the amount to which teachers meet the individual learning needs of pupils in their lessons varies across the school. In some lessons resources and activities are very effectively personalised to meet those individual needs. However, this is not always the case. In weaker lessons there is too much dependence on whole class delivery and limited use is made of resources. These lessons lack pace, pupils' attention wanes and behaviour deteriorates. Overall, pupils are removed from lessons too frequently; this disrupts learning and diminishes the impact of some effective classroom practice.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	4

How effective are leadership and management?

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement is satisfactory because the school has addressed the recommendation made at the time of its previous school inspection and the recommendations made during previous social care inspections. However, the leadership and management of teaching and learning are inadequate. Monitoring is weak and teachers are not supported to meet pupils' challenging behaviours in class without resorting to over-frequent use of the 'time out' rooms.

The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination is satisfactory. Data analysis is structured so that inequalities in achievement are readily identifiable and lead to intervention strategies. Through partnership with the local authority, specific support is provided for pupils with autism as they prepare to leave Larwood, and as a result most transfer successfully to their next school placements. Although the school does not have a written policy or action plan for community cohesion from which to evaluate the success of its actions, its work generally has a positive impact within the school, for example, the decision not to charge for school meals means that no pupil is disadvantaged by their socio-economic background.

The school has good partnerships with parents and carers and external agencies. It provides a family and community liaison officer to support pupils, parents and carers, and has strong links with the local authority, health and social services. The school seeks parents' views through surveys and pupils have a home/school diary system to facilitate daily communication.

The effectiveness of the governing body is inadequate because monitoring systems lack rigour and the governing body does not sufficiently hold the school to account. Individual

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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

governors are well known to the school and are frequent visitors but visits do not include a close enough scrutiny of the school's work.

Safeguarding is inadequate because the school does not have the rigour of internal scrutiny, checks and balances which could reasonably be expected in relation to behaviour management and in particular the use of seclusion in the 'time out' rooms. This is a breach of the school's wider safeguarding duties. Data on the frequency and duration of the use of 'time out' rooms is collated monthly and shared with the governing body. However, deeper scrutiny as to why seclusion was necessary is conducted only through informal and unrecorded conversations between staff and written accounts are not routinely analysed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
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	4
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Boarding provision

The quality of the residential provision is satisfactory. The majority of the national minimum standards are met, and some areas are exceeded. Four recommendations have been made in this report with regard to the school's fire safety risk assessment, medication administration and planning for individual care.

There are no outstanding recommendations from the previous inspection report. Behaviour management strategies used within residential time no longer include the use of the school's time-out rooms. Records relating to behaviour management now comment on the consequence and effectiveness of imposed sanctions, and also the use of physical intervention. As a result, managers and governors have the appropriate information to support the close monitoring of the use of such measures of control.

Children's care is provided by an enthusiastic staff team who are supported by an experienced and committed residential management team. The quality of care that

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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

children receive is monitored closely by managers who provide effective leadership across the residential provision. There is a respectful culture and atmosphere within the residential provision, within which children feel valued and safe, and where they develop close relationships with each other and with staff. Children are monitored closely and receive an excellent level of personal support from appropriate numbers of competent and caring staff. As a result, children have confidence in the quality of care and support available to them.

Children benefit from the manner in which residential and education staff work very closely together to support them to achieve their potential. Comments received from teachers include 'the way that care staff support and work with the education staff is actually perfect'.

Safeguarding arrangements are overseen by two key members of staff who have undergone appropriate training and who act as designated safeguarding officers. Staff attend the appropriate training which is repeated every two years. The protection of children is underpinned by suitable policies and procedures.

Behaviour is well-managed. Staff understand children's behaviour in the context of the objectives in their statement of special educational needs. Comments from children confirm that they feel that the rules are fair and that staff talk to them about their behaviour. Comments include 'staff have helped me a lot with my behaviour'. However, individual planning documents lack the necessary level of detail to ensure that all staff know how to respond to individual behaviours. The current limited behaviour management plans have not been updated to reflect the changes to behaviour management strategies agreed after the last inspection.

Issues of equality and diversity are seen as important. Individual needs are identified within an assessment process and incorporated into care arrangements. There is a commitment to providing children with opportunities for consultation and choice. Children attend the school council meetings where they are able to raise issues for discussion. Staff work closely with children creating opportunities on a daily basis for them to make their views known. Examples include, children being encouraged to reflect on their progress with known targets using words and pictures.

Children benefit from the arrangements to promote their good health. They are encouraged to be physically active and staff talk to them about the importance of being healthy. Children are supported to take on an appropriate and increasing level of responsibility for their personal care. They are provided with a healthy and well-balanced diet. All meals are prepared on site by an enthusiastic and dedicated catering team. Children are encouraged to try new foods and to make healthy choices. Dietary needs relating to health, personal preference and culture are supported. Staff consult with parents and involved health professionals about children's health care needs. However, health care plans are found to lack the required level of detail to ensure that health care needs will always be consistently met.

Medication is stored securely and the operation of the administration system is monitored closely by a member of staff with dedicated responsibility. Parents are consulted about prescribed medication requirements. While the medication system is generally effective and safe, there is no structured system to ensure that prescribed medication is taken off-site when children are away on activities. As a result, children may not have the prompt access they require to prescribed medication.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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

Children stay in well-maintained accommodation which provides sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs. Health and safety monitoring is thorough. Actions required and general maintenance are identified and supported by a dedicated site manager. While fire safety is prioritised, the school's fire-safety risk assessment has not been updated to reflect the outcome of a fire-safety audit undertaken in January 2011. As a result, fire-safety arrangements are not current, and therefore children may not be fully protected.

National Minimum Standards (NMS) to be met to improve social care

- Ensure that each child has a clearly written health plan which reflects the areas set out in national minimum standards (Breach of national minimum standard 14.6)
- Ensure that children are given medication as prescribed for them. In particular, this relates to the need to ensure the immediate availability of medication for children during trips away from the residential provision (Breach of national minimum standard 14.2)
- Ensure that where behaviour is unacceptable, this is responded to by constructive disciplinary measures which are approved by the Head of care. In particular, this relates to the need to produce detailed behaviour management plans (Breach of national minimum standard 10.1)
- Ensure that positive steps are taken to keep children, staff and visitors safe from the risk of fire. In particular, this relates to ensuring that the fire safety risk assessment is updated to reflect the areas identified for action during a fire safety audit undertaken in January 2011 (Breach of national minimum standard 26.1)

These are the grades for the boarding provision

The effectiveness of the boarding provision	3
--	----------

Views of parents and carers

Parents' responses on questionnaires were very favourable, and for some parents the school is clearly a very valued part of their family lives. One parent commented: 'Our family is deeply appreciative of Larwood school and all of its staff. It has made a big difference in our lives.' All parents who responded agreed that the school kept their child safe, met their particular needs and helped them to have a healthy lifestyle. Inspectors found that the school makes very good provision for healthy meals and physical activity but that some aspects of safeguarding require significant attention.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Larwood 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 38 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 63 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	16	42	19	50	3	8	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	66	13	34	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	19	50	15	39	1	3	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	37	21	55	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	45	19	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	42	17	45	3	8	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	53	17	45	0	0	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)	17	45	16	42	2	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	58	16	42	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	68	11	29	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	45	17	45	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	25	66	12	32	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	58	15	39	0	0	0	0

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and 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:	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 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.



23 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Larwood School, Stevenage, SG1 5QU

Thank you for the welcome you gave to me and my colleagues when we visited your school recently. Some of you spoke to us in school and some of you spoke to us in your boarding accommodation. Thank you, also, for filling out the questionnaires. This letter is to let you know the result of our inspection.

We found that you do a lot of interesting things at school, and that many of you come to school much more regularly than you did in your previous schools because you enjoy your activities. You told us that you feel safe at school but that you are concerned about behaviour and 'time out'. We were concerned about those things too, and so we have asked the headteacher to make some changes to improve them. We have also asked the governing body to make sure that your parents and carers can read up-to-date information about these and other aspects of school. We have judged the school to be inadequate at the present time because of the problems with behaviour and 'time out' that need significant improvement. We have given your school a 'notice to improve.' This means that inspectors will return to check that behaviour improves.

We found that your lessons are satisfactory overall. Some are very good and we can see how much you enjoy them. We have asked Mr Whitaker to help your teachers to be the best they can be, so that you all stay in lessons more often and make better progress.

You can all help too, by behaving as well as you can.

Yours sincerely

Lucie Calow

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.