

Larchfield Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	109938
Local authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	378012
Inspection dates	14–15 June 2012
Lead inspector	David Wynford Jones

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	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Eynon
Headteacher	Niki Alvarado
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2008
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	14–15 June 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

David Wynford Jones

Additional inspector

Christine Murrell

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 16 lessons, observing eight teachers. They heard some pupils in Years 2 and 6 read. Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection; they observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe and the school development plan. Inspectors analysed 130 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, together with those from staff and pupils.

Information about the school

Larchfield Primary and Nursery School is broadly similar in size to most schools of its type. The large majority of the pupils are of White British origin. The remaining pupils come from a number of different minority ethnic heritages. Most are of Asian background. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is slightly higher than the national average. Very few are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at 'school action plus' or have a statement of special educational needs is below average. However, the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It has successfully moved forward since the last inspection and has the capacity to improve further. It is not outstanding because there are weaknesses in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils' progress in reading and writing is inconsistent, and middle leaders have yet to fully develop their roles.
- Pupils' achievement is good. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. Overall, pupils make good progress. Their progress in reading and writing is slower than in mathematics because insufficient emphasis is placed on the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) and pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to consolidate and extend their writing skills in different subjects.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are polite. Most have a positive attitude to learning and a good understanding of personal safety.
- Teaching is good. Pupils in most year groups are making accelerated progress. However, not all teachers make explicit their expectations of pupils of different abilities, and marking, although improving, does not consistently provide pupils with sufficient guidance to improve their work. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers do not make best use of the space available to promote the learning of key skills.
- Leadership and management are good. Effective governance, systematic monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance and a clear vision for its development have enabled the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, to identify and address weaknesses in teaching and learning. As a result, provision has improved and standards have risen steadily since the last inspection. Middle leaders are supportive and keen to see the school progress further, but have not yet refined their skills in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve provision and outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation stage by:
 - making more effective use of the outdoor area to promote all areas of learning, but especially the children’s communication, language and literacy skills and their mathematical knowledge
 - ensuring that the learning environment in the Nursery fully meets the needs of the children in this age group.
- Raise standards in reading and writing across the school by:
 - placing a greater emphasis on the teaching of phonics
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to practise their speaking and listening skills
 - making certain that pupils consolidate and extend their writing skills across the curriculum.
- Ensure that the rate of pupils’ progress is consistently good by:
 - making certain that in all lessons, the expectations of pupils with differing abilities are made explicit
 - ensuring that marking always provides pupils with clear next steps for improvement
 - refining the skills of middle leaders in monitoring the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils’ learning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The majority of children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age. They settle into the Nursery well and quickly grow in self-confidence. They develop their skills satisfactorily before moving into the Reception class, where their progress is accelerated. Children do not make progress as rapidly in the Nursery because insufficient attention is given to providing a learning environment that is appropriate to their needs. For example, displays do not consistently reflect children’s early learning needs and there is a lack of creative role play areas. The outdoor area, shared between the Nursery and the Reception class, is in the process of being developed. Currently, it is not used sufficiently well to promote the children’s early literacy and numeracy skills. The teaching of phonics in the Early Years Foundation Stage is inconsistent.

Pupils’ achievement by the end of Year 6 is now good. Attainment at the end of Year 6 has risen steadily from the time of the last inspection, when standards were well below average. Current data and inspection evidence show that standards in Year 6 are broadly in line with expectations in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. This represents good progress from the start of Year 3, when pupils’ attainment was well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. The success in mathematics can partly be attributed to the raising of teachers’ and pupils’

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expectations, a focus on developing the use of mathematical terminology and ensuring pupils are able to explain their work. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils confidently used correct terminology to describe various two-dimensional shapes and explained how they had calculated various angles.

Progress in reading and writing has not been as marked as in mathematics. This is because insufficient emphasis is placed on the teaching of phonics to support and develop pupils' reading and writing skills. As a result, not all pupils have a range of strategies to read and to attempt to spell unfamiliar words. In some classes, pupils' writing skills and their targets are not routinely reinforced in lessons other than English. Nevertheless, improvements in the quality of teaching and higher expectations are leading to higher standards in reading and writing. Currently, standards in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average.

There is no marked difference in performance between any sizeable groups, such as disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, or those who speak English as an additional language. Girls tend to reach slightly higher standards than the boys. This is being monitored carefully by senior leaders and, where appropriate, support is given. The difference in performance can in part be attributed to the make-up and small size of each year group. Nearly all parents and carers who returned questionnaires rightly feel their children are making good progress and the school is helping them to develop their skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics.

Quality of teaching

Pupils make good progress because teaching is typically good and well matched to their needs. Teachers routinely share the purpose of the lesson with the pupils. Most lessons proceed at a quick pace. Teachers use questioning strategies effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and to extend their knowledge. Some teachers make good use of opportunities for pupils to engage in discussion with a talk-partner and so develop their linguistic and social skills. For example, in a Year 2 English lesson, pupils were asked to share their experiences with each other following their visit to a local farm. They did so enthusiastically and demonstrated skills expected for their age. This approach helped the pupils to explore language and to develop ideas for their written work. However, this strategy is not yet embedded across the school.

Adult support is usually deployed well to help individuals and small groups. This enables pupils, particularly those who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, to make progress similar to that of their peers. For example, in a Year 1 class, the teaching assistant worked closely with a group of pupils to create a sentence to record their visit to the farm. Adults hear pupils read on a reasonably regular basis but do not consistently promote pupils' knowledge and use of phonics.

Marking is undertaken on a regular basis and pupils are encouraged to mark their own work. Teachers make good use of praise and some helpful next-step comments

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help pupils to make progress toward their literacy and numeracy targets. However, this strategy of recording advice for improvement is not sufficiently well embedded in all classes. In some lessons, teachers do not always make clear their expectations of the pupils working at different levels or take advantage of opportunities to promote and consolidate pupils' writing skills. As a result, at times some pupils are not sufficiently challenged. For example, in an English lesson, all pupils were expected to complete the same task without any clear guidance as to what was expected of individuals.

Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, social and moral development effectively. This is reflected in pupils' good behaviour in class and around the school. Some aspects of cultural development are promoted particularly well in art, music and an appreciation of some European languages – Italian, French and Spanish. However, there is insufficient emphasis on ensuring that pupils gain a sufficiently broad understanding of different religions and living in today's multicultural society.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils have a positive attitude to learning and are proud of their school. They behave well and have a good understanding of personal safety. Pupils are polite and respectful to adults and visitors. Several came and introduced themselves to the inspectors and enquired if they could help them in any way. Nearly all pupils said they enjoyed school and found the work interesting. They take good care of the environment and are keen to help in the school garden. The school council is proactive in helping to move the school forward and gives regular reports to the governing body.

Observations and school records show that there are very few bullying or racist incidents. Pupils are aware of the different forms bullying can take. They confirm that instances of bullying, including name-calling and fighting, are infrequent and if they do occur, staff deal with them swiftly. They understand the importance of internet safety and not divulging personal information to others. Older pupils spoke knowledgeably about road safety. Younger children recalled the importance of washing hands following stroking and feeding animals during the visit to a local farm. Pupils' attendance has improved steadily and is now securely in line with the national average for primary schools. Pupils' positive interaction with each other contributes much to their social and moral development.

A few parents and carers raised concerns about behaviour and bullying. Inspectors found no evidence to corroborate these concerns. Most parents and carers believe that pupils are kept safe and that behaviour is good.

Leadership and management

Effective governance and strong leadership by the headteacher and deputy headteacher have driven the school forward since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved and standards have risen, expectations are higher and pupils

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are now making good progress. Staff have responded well to senior leaders' commitment to improving provision through professional development and performance management. Systems and structures have been introduced to monitor and evaluate pupils' attainment and progress. Staff are increasingly being held to account for the progress of pupils in their class. Realistic but challenging targets are set. The school development plan is clear and accurately identifies the key areas for development. These are underpinned by appropriate tasks. Middle leaders are developing their expertise well. However, they have not yet gained a secure overview of the work of the school or consolidated their skills in evaluating teaching and its impact on learning and progress.

The governing body has effective systems for monitoring the work of the school, ensuring that it meets the latest government requirements on safeguarding, and providing an appropriate level of challenge to senior leaders. Under the leadership of an effective chairman, the governing body scrutinises the school's data in detail so that any possible instances of a lack of equality of opportunity or discrimination are investigated thoroughly. This has contributed to the ongoing improvement in standards, the acceleration of pupils' progress and the improved reputation of the school within the local community.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and promotes pupils' learning, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, well. The school is in the process of reviewing the curriculum to ensure that there are closer links in learning between subjects, and the skills pupils develop in English and mathematics are consolidated in other lessons. The curriculum is enhanced by a suitable range of after-school activities, visits and visitors to the school. Given its effective systems and structures, and the progress made since the last inspection, the school has the capacity to improve further.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



18 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Larchfield Primary and Nursery School, Maidenhead SL6 2SG

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school, and for completing the questionnaire. A special 'thank you' to the two pupils who showed us around the school, and to those who came and introduced themselves to us. We enjoyed our visit and talking to you. You were very polite. In our discussions, you told us that you enjoy school and feel safe because the staff look after you. You know that you can turn to them if you are worried. Your behaviour is good. You are taking more responsibility for yourselves and showing a greater interest in your work. Your attendance is also improving. Well done – keep it up!

Your school provides you with a good education. By the end of Year 6, your attainment is similar to the national average in reading and writing and above the expected levels in mathematics. This represents good progress and achievement during your time at the school.

We have asked the school to help you to make even better progress and reach higher standards, especially in reading and writing, by:

- developing the Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor area, with a greater emphasis on teaching literacy and numeracy skills
- placing a great emphasis on the teaching of phonics, and giving you more opportunities to develop your writing by allowing you more time to talk in class and practise your writing skills in different subjects
- making certain that you know what is expected of you in lessons, and that you are given clear regular written guidance on how to improve your work
- asking middle leaders to look a little more closely at how teachers are helping you learn.

Please remember that to make your school better, you must always try your best.

Yours sincerely

David Wynford-Jones
Lead inspector

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