

Long Lane Primary School

Long Lane, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 6YG

Inspection dates

14–15 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Pupils' attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6. Their achievement requires improvement because progress is not consistently good across the school.
- Teaching in Key Stage 1 and to a lesser extent in Years 3 and 4 does not meet the needs of all pupils well enough. Work is sometimes too hard or too easy for some pupils because teachers are not always clear about what they want them to learn.
- The gap between the attainment of pupils who receive additional government funding (the pupil premium) and others is not closing quickly enough.
- The school is improving steadily after a period of significant transition when the pace of change was slowed by changes in staff.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher take on too much responsibility for ensuring improvement. Teachers who are in charge of subjects do not play a big enough part in improving teaching.
- Leaders do not always set challenging enough targets to ensure that all pupils make good progress.

The school has the following strengths:

- The senior leadership team is doing the right things to iron out inconsistencies in teaching. Consequently, more teaching is becoming good.
- Now that there is a settled staff, senior leaders and the governing body are tackling the remaining weaknesses more rigorously. This is already bringing about better learning in most classes and attainment is beginning to rise.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class. Teaching is good and children learn new skills quickly.
- Pupils' progress is also good in Years 5 and 6. The high expectations of teachers ensure that pupils learn well.
- The school successfully supports pupils' personal and social development. Pupils' behaviour is good and they feel safe.
- Clubs and visits enrich learning and are important factors in pupils' thorough enjoyment of school.
- There is a good number of sport and music activities and these are particularly popular with pupils.
- The school has a good partnership with parents and carers. They are pleased with recent improvements and support the school well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 21 lessons, of which around half were joint observations with the headteacher or other senior managers. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, members of staff and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the views of 60 parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View). The inspectors also read letters from parents and carers and talked to some at the start of the school day.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work, heard pupils read, and looked at a number of documents, including the school’s own information about pupils’ learning and progress, planning and monitoring documents, the school development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding information.
- The inspectors analysed 25 questionnaires from staff.

Inspection team

Mike Capper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Rosemarie McCarthy

Additional Inspector

Cliff Mainey

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school. Most pupils come from the local community, but about 40% travel to the school from further afield.
- A small number of pupils join the school in Year 3 from a nearby infant school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Reception class.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding given to the school for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and the children of service families) is below average. There are currently only 2 children of service families at the school, and none that are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection in 2009, there has been almost a complete turnover of teaching staff. The acting headteacher at that time has since been appointed permanently.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good, especially in Key Stage 1 and Years 3 and 4, by ensuring that teachers are clear about what they expect pupils to learn and use this information to plan work that is not too hard or too easy for any pupils.
- Close the gap between the attainment of pupils supported by the pupil premium and others by monitoring more rigorously recent initiatives to build on what is working well and to improve what is proving ineffective.
- Strengthen leadership and management and build on recent improvements by:
 - ensuring that responsibility for improving teaching and learning is shared more widely among staff, especially teachers in charge of subjects
 - ensuring that targets for the progress that pupils should make from year to year are set at high enough levels to secure good progress across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement. The school does not promote equality well enough across the school because, despite recent improvements, progress is not consistently good. In Key Stage 1 and some classes in Years 3 and 4, pupils do not always make enough progress because there are occasions when their needs are not met well enough. Although a decline in attainment has been halted, broadly average attainment at the end of Year 6 in national tests in 2012 reflected no better than adequate progress for these pupils from their starting points. Pupils in the small group who join in Year 3 make the same rates of progress as others of the same age in the school.
- The gap between the attainment of pupils who benefit from the pupil premium and others is not closing rapidly enough. The gap in national tests at the end of Year 6 was larger than that found nationally, with eligible pupils around a year behind their classmates in English and mathematics. Eligible pupils now have individual plans to show their needs and they are getting more additional support, including individual teaching and more help outside lessons, than previously. This is ensuring that the gap is beginning to close more quickly but the progress of eligible pupils remains inconsistent.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similarly uneven progress as others in lessons. They make the best progress when being supported in small groups outside lessons because at these times work is more closely matched to need.
- Pupils' progress is consistently good in some parts of the school. When children start school in the Reception class, most are working at the expected levels for their age. They make good progress, developing a wide range of skills. Children's knowledge of letters and the sounds that they make (phonics) improves quickly and they write and read confidently by the end of the year.
- Pupils also make good progress in Years 5 and 6. The current Year 6 pupils are already working at slightly higher levels than last year's group and are set to build on the small improvements seen in national tests in 2012, especially in mathematics. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are becoming increasingly confident readers and they apply their mathematical skills to solve complex problems and carry out investigations.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching over time has not been good enough to bring about consistently good progress for all pupils. Although changes in staff and extra support from leaders are ensuring that there is now more good teaching than previously, too much still requires improvement, especially in Key Stage 1 and, to a lesser extent, in Years 3 and 4.
- Where teaching requires improvement, teachers are unclear about what they expect pupils to learn in lessons. Explanations do not always give pupils a clear picture of why they are doing something and when this happens pupils do not concentrate well enough.
- Although teachers have a wealth of information about what pupils already know, they do not always use this information well enough to plan the next steps in learning. Consequently there are occasions when work is too hard or too easy for some pupils and the pace of learning is too slow.
- There is good teaching in many parts of the school. In the Reception class, teaching is sometimes outstanding and children learn new skills quickly. Adults use questioning well to move on learning when children are working independently. They take every opportunity to assess learning so that they know what to teach next. A current focus on developing children's speaking and listening skills is proving effective. Activities such as 'The Mud Kitchen' promote these skills well, giving children good opportunities to talk together.
- In Years 5 and 6, pupils make good progress because teachers ensure that work provides the

right level of challenge. Teachers in these year groups have high expectations, although they occasionally accept work that is not presented neatly enough.

- Across the school, teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning. They provide good support to groups outside lessons, especially when working with disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- In all classes, teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. Improvements in marking and setting targets mean that pupils have more clarity about how to improve than at the time of the previous inspection, although this is not yet consistently strong across the whole school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils both in and out of lessons is good. Pupils feel that behaviour has improved in the last year. They like the new systems for promoting good behaviour and say that they are 'fair'.
- In lessons, pupils are keen to do their best and they work hard, although just occasionally some do not concentrate well enough when they are unclear about what they are supposed to be learning.
- Pupils are kind and caring and play together happily. Pupils who arrive at school in Year 3 settle quickly because 'Everyone is kind to us.'
- High rates of attendance demonstrate pupils' thorough enjoyment of school. Pupils say that they enjoy school more than in the past because 'Lessons are now more fun.'
- Pupils feel safe at school and say that there is very little bullying or falling out. They are confident that staff will tackle any worries quickly because 'The grown-ups always listen to us.' Pupils talk knowledgeably about how to avoid dangers in the wider world, for example, explaining how to stay safe when using the internet.
- Pupils enthusiastically take responsibility by being school councillors or peer mediators. School councillors are given good opportunities to take initiative. For example, they are proud of their 'Be-a-Teacher-for-a-Day' fund raising activity which was greatly enjoyed by pupils and staff.
- The school successfully fosters good relationships between pupils and adults and tackles discrimination effectively. Despite inconsistent progress, the pupil premium is used well to ensure that eligible pupils have full access to activities. This contributes significantly to their good social development and self-esteem.

The leadership and management require improvement

- The school is improving steadily, but the pace of change since the previous inspection has been slowed by staff changes. This means that, until fairly recently, falling attainment was not being tackled rigorously enough. This is no longer the case. There is now a settled staff and the senior leadership team is able to focus more sharply on the most important areas for improvement. This is already ensuring good improvement in areas such as mathematics, where subject leadership is strongest. Recent improvements have been supported well by the local authority which continues to give appropriate guidance and help.
- Senior leaders are ensuring that teaching and learning are improving because weaker teachers are given clear guidance about what they need to do better. However, senior leaders take on too much responsibility for this and teachers in charge of subjects do not play a big enough part in improving the quality of teaching.
- The school has much information on pupils' learning. Senior leaders are using this increasingly sharply to set targets for the progress that pupils should make from year to year but these are not always challenging enough to secure good achievement across the school.
- The school checks the impact of some initiatives very thoroughly, for example in monitoring the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. However, this is not always the case. The use of the pupil premium is much improved in the current year but the

impact of initiatives to improve the progress of eligible pupils is not checked with sufficient rigour so that successes can be built on. Consequently, the gap in attainment between eligible pupils and others is still too large.

- The curriculum (topics and the subjects taught) soundly supports the development of pupils' basic skills. Recent work on establishing closer links between different subjects is already helping to make learning more purposeful. There is a clear focus in lessons on promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils show good concern for the needs of others and happily take part in acts of collective worship.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is becoming increasingly effective at supporting the school to improve. Regular training has helped governors to develop their skills. They receive a good amount of information from the headteacher and this means that they understand how well the school is doing in comparison with others. They keep a watchful eye on the quality of teaching and know where it is stronger or weaker, ensuring that only good performance is rewarded financially. Governors monitor spending closely. They know how the pupil premium is being used, but cannot say with confidence which interventions are proving most effective as their effect is not checked closely enough. Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	109853
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	413105

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	275
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Lowery
Headteacher	Peter Thorne
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2009
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