



Long Wittenham (Church of England) Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123153
LEA Oxfordshire LEA
Inspection number 281413
Inspection dates 12 July 2006 to 13 July 2006
Reporting inspector Christopher Parker AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	High Street
School category	Voluntary controlled		Long Wittenham
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Abingdon OX14 4QJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01865 407850
Number on roll	102	Fax number	01865 407369
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Derek Williams
Date of previous inspection	19 October 1999	Headteacher	Mr Tim Coulson

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 11	12 July 2006 - 13 July 2006	281413

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a much smaller than average school. Most pupils come from relatively advantaged homes. A few take free school meals. About a third travel from outside the immediate area. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds and all are fluent English speakers. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is lower than average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'...the school has been very kindly and carefully taught and the children have made good progress...' This was the judgement of inspectors who visited the school in 1893. Over a hundred years later, good teaching and an interesting curriculum ensures pupils also make good progress. More recent developments such as the school's thorough tracking, analysis of pupils' progress and accurate self evaluation, aligned to the many improvements made since the last inspection in 1999, show it has a strong capacity to improve further.

This is a good school with many strong features that provides good value for money. Overall, standards are above average and pupils are achieving well. The youngest children make a very lively start to their education because the provision is excellent. A recent and successful drive to improve standards in writing illustrates very well the influential leadership of the headteacher, the capability of the teaching and non teaching staff and the positive attitudes to learning of the pupils. Their collective efforts have resulted in a marked rise and high standards in English in the national tests at the end of Year 6. Standards in mathematics are not as high and, although above average, pupils make satisfactory rather than the rapid progress they make in English and science. The school has turned the spotlight on mathematics as a priority for improvement next year.

The pupils' personal development and well being are good. They behave well and greatly enjoy school. One parent commented how her children, 'are always full of what they have done at the end of each school day.' Another wrote that her daughter had 'blossomed' at the school. Parents hold the school in high regard.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate progress in mathematics so that all pupils reach the highest standards of which they are capable.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children make a good start to school and most reach the goals set for the end of the Reception year. Pupils continue to make good progress and reach standards that are above average overall by the end of Year 2. Standards this year are not quite as high as they were in 2005 when they were significantly above average. Nevertheless, the school's comprehensive tracking of progress confirms that pupils are doing well.

Whilst there is some variation from year to year in the results at the end of Year 6, there are also variations in the progress the pupils make in each subject. Recent efforts to raise standards in writing have culminated in impressive national test results in English this year, which have exceeded challenging targets. All pupils attained the expected level for their age and two thirds reached the higher level. Results were not quite as high in science, but were nonetheless well above average. In mathematics

pupils made satisfactory progress and met the targets set for them, but fewer pupils reached or exceeded the expected level. Whilst standards are above average overall and pupils are making good progress between Year 3 and 6 they are not doing as well in mathematics as they are in English. Pupils with learning difficulties make equally good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils say they greatly enjoy school because they have many opportunities to participate in interesting activities which they find lively and engaging. Their attendance is above average. One pupil commented that, 'Everyone is really friendly'. Consequently, pupils get on well, feel safe and act responsibly. One pupil openly discussed how his teacher had helped to improve his behaviour and to recognise that he and his work were valued. Pupils behave well, but there are instances where their enthusiasm and eagerness to contribute to discussions lead them to interrupt others. The older pupils particularly enjoy the responsibility of being reading 'buddies'. They make a good contribution to the wider community through charity collections and sponsored events. Older children know it is important to eat healthily. They say that school meals are now much healthier, 'and are still really nice!' The pupils welcome the many opportunities to participate in sporting activities and understand that it is important to keep fit. Pupils are gaining a range of skills that will equip them well for their future economic well-being, although they have too few opportunities to use the numeracy skills they learn to solve problems.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Monthly themes promote values such as happiness, which are explored during assembly. Personal, social and health education lessons extend their development. In a lesson in Years 3 and 4, pupils made thoughtful contributions to a discussion on responsibility. Pupils gain a diverse cultural perspective by studying the work of artists such as Kandinsky and Goldsworthy, their involvement with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and learning about life in India and Africa.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The teaching of the youngest children is particularly strong. The needs of the children are thoughtfully met through lively activities that enhance learning. For example, whilst some Year 1 pupils were writing in detail about the 'Rainbow Fish' the children in Reception were dressing up and re-enacting the story in the outdoor area.

The teachers, in all year groups, make it very clear what they expect the pupils to learn, and modify the tasks they set to take account of different ages and abilities. Lessons are lively and well paced. The pupils say that they do well because their teachers, 'make lessons so interesting.'

The pupils' writing skills are now developed systematically and successfully because they are very well taught. In addition, classrooms and displays motivate and guide pupils to achieve high standards in writing. However, the same high profile conditions for learning are not as evident in mathematics.

Improvements in marking, target setting and assessment have been instrumental in raising standards in writing. Pupils find the targets set for them help them to concentrate on where they need to improve and one commented that he found it, 'interesting to read the teacher's comments,' when his work had been marked.

Teachers and teaching assistants work together well. They provide well targeted support for individual pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The pupils enjoy the broad and interesting range of work they do. Whilst talking about his work a pupil added, 'We are lucky to do French, and it's fun!' The Foundation Stage curriculum for children in the Reception class is skilfully interwoven with provision for the pupils in Year 1.

There is very good provision for literacy and for pupils to extend and enhance their writing in other subjects, all of which have contributed to the improved standards in English. Whilst opportunities exist for pupils to use and apply their numeracy skills in other subjects they are not extensive enough to raise standards in mathematics further. The introduction of interactive whiteboards has added significantly to the use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum. The pupils make good use of laptops to extend their skills and to enhance their learning. For example in geography, Year 2 pupils were finding out about the natural and built environment at the seaside.

Educational visits to, for example, Blenheim Palace, add interest to the curriculum and help to bring colour and life to the pupils' learning. A recent theatre trip was chosen especially to provide a different dimension to learning in mathematics. Pupils value and enjoy the many clubs and extra-curricular activities the school provides.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school creates safe, lively and welcoming conditions for learning, which aids pupils' learning. One parent whose child joined the school quite recently was very pleased by how her child had been, 'welcomed with open arms'. The progress of each child is carefully monitored and recorded in considerable detail.

Health and safety checks are carried out appropriately. The teachers have all had training in child protection procedures. Arrangements for supporting the progress and well being of pupils with learning difficulties are good and effective in ensuring they are fully included in lessons and play a full part in the life of the school. Links with

outside agencies are used effectively to provide support for the pupils when it is necessary.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership of the school has developed a successful record of raising standards. Over the last year initiatives to accelerate progress in writing have been implemented in response to shortcomings identified through self evaluation. The staff have worked together to plan and execute changes in aspects of their teaching and support for pupils. Whilst many of these changes have been minor, the cumulative effect has been a significant improvement in standards at the end of Year 6.

The mathematics coordinator, with the headteacher's support, has carried out a comprehensive analysis of the provision for pupils and the progress they make. Plans are in place to tackle minor weaknesses in teaching, the curriculum and the additional support available for pupils in mathematics. The school is well placed to be as successful in reaching high standards in mathematics as it has been in English. The headteacher's ability to focus improvement activities sharply is the direct result of detailed tracking of pupils' progress and thorough analysis of the standards they reach. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and the work of teaching assistants is comprehensive and adds to the extensive picture of the school's performance which emerges from a wide range of such activities.

The views of parents are sought and acted upon. Governors recently discussed concerns expressed by parents. In response they enlisted the help of specialist advisers. The headteacher holds a termly meeting with parents to discuss their views about the school and proposals for school improvement. Governors also meet with members of the school council to listen to their views. The governing body is increasingly active in the evaluation of the school's performance. As a result, it is better able to hold the school to account and direct its future improvement.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Pupils

This letter is to tell you about the findings of the recent inspection and to thank you for taking the time to talk to me about your school. You attend a good school which is friendly and caring. You behave well. You told me that you enjoy school very much and feel safe at playtimes. Some of you also said that the school provides lots of interesting opportunities and I agree. You are given responsibilities which you particularly enjoy because it shows the teachers trust you.

The headteacher and teachers are helping you to make good progress. They set you targets in your work, which help you to concentrate on what you need to improve. The teachers successfully introduce new ideas in their interesting and lively lessons. Over the last year the teachers have focussed on improving your writing, and it has worked. Those of you who have taken tests have done really well in English. The results in mathematics are not as good so the teachers are going to work to improve them next year. I agree that this where the school could do even better.

The headteacher is leading the school well and is constantly looking at how well it is doing so that improvements can be made to the building, the opportunities the school provides for you, and the standards you achieve. I hope that in the future it is even more successful in helping you to do as well as you possibly can.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Parker

Lead Inspector