

# Longfield Middle School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102199
<b>Local Authority</b>	Harrow
<b>Inspection number</b>	286306
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Nicola Davies

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	8–12
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	323
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Dipak Umeria
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Pam Virdee
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 February 2002
<b>School address</b>	Duke's Avenue North Harrow Harrow HA2 7NZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8866 7331
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8429 2891

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<b>Age group</b>	8–12
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This larger-than-average middle school educates pupils from Year 4 to Year 7. It serves an advantaged area of diverse cultures, languages and socio-economic circumstances. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Around two thirds of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mostly of Indian and Sri Lankan Tamil heritage. Around half of the pupils have a home language other than English, which is much higher than average. A few pupils are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language, as they have joined the school from overseas. Pupils' attainment on entry to Year 4 is average.

Following a good level of stability provided by the previous headteacher, the school was without a permanent headteacher for a year. During this time, the school was led first by the deputy headteacher, and on her retirement by an interim headteacher. The new headteacher took up her post a week before the inspection.

## 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 provides a good education for its pupils. Despite the lack of a permanent headteacher, over this last year committed staff have undertaken many successful initiatives. These include good additional opportunities for pupils in art, music and creativity and the encouragement of pupils' good understanding of healthy lifestyles. Teachers have also introduced effective new approaches to writing. Staff and pupils are proud of their school, enjoy their lessons and have good attitudes to learning, teaching and to each other. As a result, pupils' personal development is good and the school is a happy and friendly place where teamwork thrives. Pupils have good systems to share their ideas through the active school council which have led to significant improvements. One of their successes is the outdoor climbing equipment. Pupils are now planning playground zones to make sure that the outdoor play space meets everyone's needs fairly.

Standards in national tests at the end of year 6 are above average and pupils generally make good progress due to the good teaching and curriculum they receive. Achievement overall is good. Teachers efficiently track the progress which pupils make in their own classes but there are weaknesses in the way this information is used to track progress over the long term. This issue has already been identified and work to improve it is underway. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning have been taking place regularly despite the temporary arrangements. However, the findings have not been analysed systematically and used effectively. As a result, although most pupils achieve well, there are sometimes inconsistencies between classes and year groups.

The number of leadership changes within one year has limited the effectiveness of the school's leadership and management. This is satisfactory but the school has not achieved all it set out to do or needs to do. For example, it has not kept a central record of checks to safeguard learners. However, the very recent appointment of a full and permanent leadership team has ended this period of uncertainty in the life of the school. Work is already underway to address weaker areas or omissions. These are being tackled by the new headteacher and her enthusiastic staff with determination and imagination and contribute to the school's satisfactory capacity to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the way that assessment data is used to track pupils' progress during their time at school and to inform accurate self evaluation
- Ensure robust monitoring and evaluation of teaching raises all teaching to be consistently good
- Ensure the school meets statutory requirements, particularly in relation to the safeguarding of pupils.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils generally attain above average standards in national tests at the end of Year 6. However, two years ago standards dipped sharply. The school identified the causes of this dip and took action to address them. This was successful and particularly so in English. Pupils' standards in the 2006 tests were exceptionally high in the subject and over half of the pupils achieved at

the higher levels. Standards in mathematics and science were also above average. Standards are above average in the current Year 6 and Year 7.

Most pupils achieve well. Inspection evidence indicates that, although progress dipped in national tests in 2005, this has been overcome and current pupils are making good progress. However, there are inconsistencies. For example, the good progress made in one year is not always carried over consistently in the next. The school has rightly identified that it needs to improve its systems to track progress so that areas of strength can be built on and weaknesses rapidly identified and addressed. This work is already underway. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress due to the careful monitoring and effective support they receive.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy their education a great deal and this is demonstrated by their positive attitudes to learning. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils are well aware of healthy eating and keeping fit. They respond particularly well to the good provision for sports and exercise. Pupils feel safe in school and know that there is someone they can turn to if they are in difficulty. They also appreciate the fact that they can use a 'Think Book' to indicate any problems confidentially if they prefer.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good. Pupils gain in confidence and self-esteem as they go through the school. They have a good understanding of the diversity of cultures in society and appreciate the different skills, languages and abilities of their peers. Pupils make a good contribution to their own school community through the school council, and to the wider community through raising money for charity. Pupils carry out their roles as peer mediators and 'friendship buddies' with enjoyment and dedication. Pupils develop skills and qualities that equip them well for future working roles.

Pupils arrive punctually and attendance is above average. However there has been a recent rise in the number of pupils who miss school without a written explanation.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is good overall. Teachers plan a good range of learning experiences that excite and motivate pupils, who make good strides in their learning as a result. Skilful questioning is used to draw out ideas from pupils and high expectations engage them at all stages. In the few lessons where teaching is only satisfactory, the work is not matched well enough to the different abilities of pupils, or the pace is too slow and pupils have limited opportunities to apply and discuss their knowledge. All teachers establish a strong rapport with pupils and this generates a secure environment where pupils investigate and try out new ideas with confidence. Teachers enable pupils to enjoy learning by adopting a wide range of methods and activities and using technology effectively. Support staff play a successful role, particularly in helping and guiding pupils who are experiencing difficulties to make good progress.

## Curriculum and other activities

### Grade: 2

The curriculum is good overall and covers a wide range of interesting learning activities and experiences. It is planned well to meet the pupils' needs. Good attention is paid to developing basic skills and making the curriculum creative and enjoyable through well-planned links between subjects. For example, pupils learn about healthy living through science and physical education. Similarly, in a design and technology lesson, pupils enjoyed making musical instruments and then had good opportunities to develop their English skills by talking and writing about their experience. Pupils also benefit from the good opportunities they have to use technology to enhance their learning. Pupils learn French in Year 7. The school has plans in place to extend this to younger pupils, in addition to the language clubs it provides or hosts.

Pupils enjoy the good range of well attended after-school and lunchtime sports and musical activities, for example, football, netball, art, dance and drama. Other activities, such as an excursion to France, and a good number of educational visits and visitors enliven the pupils' learning and contribute to their good personal development and basic skills.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Good transfer arrangements ensure that all pupils, including those with particular difficulties, feel secure and make a good start in their new school. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities generally receive well targeted support which helps them to make good progress. This is exemplified in classrooms where specific children receive purposeful extra support from teaching assistants. There are good links with outside agencies which are well used to support more vulnerable pupils and others with particular needs.

The disrupted management over the past year has left the school with some shortcomings in its procedures to support and protect pupils. For example, the record of safeguarding checks on employees is not yet centrally held. Although the school has a good policy to promote race equality, it has identified that it does not have robust arrangements to identify its impact. However, pupils recognise that racism and bullying are rare, and as a result, feel safe. They feel well supported in school and that adults or peer mediators are understanding of any concerns raised.

Academic guidance for pupils is satisfactory. Targets for pupils to achieve are understood by them and shared with parents. However this is not yet consistent across year groups and subjects.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Leaders and managers have accurately identified strengths and areas of weakness. The school has made good progress in some of the areas which it has set out to improve. For example, actions to improve the way writing is taught have shown considerable success. Similarly, initiatives to promote creative activity, good behaviour and pupils' adoption of healthy lifestyles have also been successful and have resulted in the school acquiring a number of externally validated awards. However, changes in leadership

over the past year have meant that progress has been delayed in important areas which the school itself had identified as needing improvement. These include improving the school's tracking system and ensuring a systematic approach to safeguarding children. Arrangements for managing subjects have improved significantly since the last inspection. For example, subject leaders now have responsibility to undertake regular reviews of progress in their subjects. However, the monitoring of teaching is not as robust and systematic as it could be.

Governors support the school and keep a close track on the use of its resources to make sure that money is well spent. They challenge the school to make further improvements. One successful example is their scrutiny of targets which led them to conclude that these were not high enough. As a result, targets set this year have been much more challenging. However, the governing body has not met all its statutory duties.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	No
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

14 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Longfield Middle School, Duke's Avenue, North Harrow, Harrow, HA2 7NZ

Thank you for welcoming us to your school recently. It was lovely to meet so many of you and to share in some of your activities. Everyone we met was polite and helpful. It was very useful to us to hear your views and to hear how well you are involved in making changes to the school. We are sure the playground zones will be extremely effective.

This letter is to let you know briefly the findings of our inspection. Our judgement is that the school is good overall. There are many good things about the school. For example, you develop well as responsible young people and the school provides you with an exciting curriculum. The standards that you reach are above average and you make good progress in most of your lessons. We have asked your new headteacher to use information about your progress to judge what is working well and where things could be better. The school has very clear ideas about how to do this which are already underway. We have suggested that teachers have more opportunities to observe each other's lessons, so they can help each other to get even better. We have also asked the school to make sure that it meets requirements from the government.

A number of you have been forgetting to make sure that if you miss school, your parents send a letter to explain why. It will help the school if you make sure that you remember. We are sure you shall.

With best wishes for your future

Nicola Davies Lead Inspector