



Longford CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112835
Local Authority DERBYSHIRE
Inspection number 289431
Inspection dates 8–9 January 2007
Reporting inspector Geof Timms

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Longford
School category	Voluntary controlled		Ashbourne
Age range of pupils	4–11		Derbyshire DE6 3DR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01335 330364
Number on roll (school)	62	Fax number	01335 330793
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Rev Michael Bishop
		Headteacher	Mrs M Matthews
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a very small school which serves a largely rural part of Derbyshire. The level of attainment children have when they enter the Reception class varies considerably owing to the very small numbers, but in most years is broadly in line with that expected. Very few of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. All pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average overall, although high in some year groups. A few pupils have a statement of special need which enables the school to provide extra support. The school has gained a national Healthy Schools award, a Basic Skills Quality Mark, and is working towards an anti-bullying Excellence Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which provides pupils with an effective education. There are outstanding features, including the caring nature of the school, the personal development of the pupils and the extra-curricular activities offered to them. The school provides good value for money. As a parent pointed out, 'Longford provides a positive environment for each child to achieve their full potential, and offers a supportive learning experience.'

Standards achieved are often above average and especially good in science. Teachers build well on the attainment children show when they start in Reception, and they make good progress throughout the school. Standards in writing are weaker than in other subjects, although still satisfactory. The school is aware of this and has carried out some improvement work that is already beginning to have a positive impact on standards. However, not enough opportunities are currently provided to write at length in other subjects such as history, or to write imaginatively rather than factually. The provision for the Reception children is good and parents are happy that the children have a very good start to their school lives.

The outstanding personal development of pupils results in a high level of spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Pupils have an exceptional understanding of how to lead healthy lives. They understand how to keep themselves safe and talking to them, as well as watching them take a full and active part in lessons, clearly shows how much they enjoy school. They make outstanding contributions to the local and wider community, through the school council, charity work or taking part in other events. They have excellent opportunities to develop the skills needed for their future success.

The teaching and learning are consistently good and this has a positive impact on achievement. There are many strengths in lessons, although teachers occasionally do not make clear enough to pupils exactly what they are expected to learn in each lesson, so that the pupils themselves can check how well they have done at the end. Detailed tracking of pupils' progress on an individual basis is used very well to highlight strengths and areas where pupils would benefit from extra support. This support is then effectively provided by staff in a variety of ways, including extra tuition and working with other adults individually or in small groups. The curriculum is good but not enough links are made between subjects, and the latest national guidance on providing an excellent curriculum is not yet fully embedded in practice. The school offers an outstanding level of additional activities for its size.

The school is very well led by a headteacher who has a clear focus on raising standards even further and on helping all pupils achieve well. She is well supported by staff and by an effective governing body. The staff work together well as a team and the leadership of subjects has improved greatly since the last inspection. Together with improvements made in literacy and in music provision this shows that the school is well placed to improve further in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by providing more opportunities for pupils to use their skills in different subjects and more opportunities for imaginative writing.
- Review the curriculum to help teachers to make appropriate links between subjects.
- Provide pupils with more opportunities for them to assess their own progress in lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

As with most small schools, attainment can vary widely from year to year owing to the low number of pupils taking the tests. However, standards at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently above average and represent good progress from when pupils start school. In 2005 the results at the end of Year 6 were above average overall, but below average in English. This was due to the year group having a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. In 2006, performance was targeted to be much higher in English and mathematics, and the test results confirmed this. The pupils had made good progress from their results at the end of Year 2, and achieved well. Science is a particular strength and the results are consistently exceptionally high owing to the very effective teaching of this subject. The tracking of individual pupils supports the picture of at least satisfactory and often good progress made by all groups of pupils. The very good science standards achieved build on the good knowledge and understanding of the world children have when they start at the school in Reception. Good progress is made from the weaker communication and literacy skills children have on admission, although standards in writing remain a focus for improvement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

This aspect is outstanding because of the school's very hard work to ensure that pupils are growing into effective learners and becoming valuable members of society. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They are given high levels of responsibility and independence as they get older, which they willingly accept and carry out. The pupils enjoy school greatly and happily talk about the things they like doing. This is also shown by the above average levels of attendance. Behaviour is good and has a positive impact on learning. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to lead healthy lives, and they take part in a good range of physical activities. The pupils who are part of the school council have a detailed understanding of how they can help the school improve and how successful their earlier ideas have been.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The teaching and learning are good because of the teachers' careful planning for mixed-age classes. This ensures that work is pitched appropriately, given pupils' prior knowledge and understanding. The teaching of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good, especially where regular teaching assistant time is provided. Teachers use the available space well and create a positive and interesting learning environment. The best teaching is characterised by some very effective questioning and opportunities for pupils to discuss problems together, sharing ideas and developing their learning skills. Lessons have a good pace and are well managed to ensure little time is wasted. Teachers do not always make it quite clear enough to pupils exactly what they are learning in a lesson, and why. Teachers' knowledge of their subjects is strong, particularly in science, and this is reflected in the good levels of achievement. Teachers identify pupils' learning targets well. Sometimes these targets are not written in 'child friendly' language so that pupils can check even more easily and regularly how well they are doing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good overall, and its planning is effective. There are outstanding features to the curriculum and these are beginning to have a positive impact on standards. The school has an exceptional level of after-school and extra-curricular activities given its size, and these are well attended by a good proportion of the pupils. Teachers devise and plan a range of enrichment activities such as writing days and themed weeks. Very effective use is made of outside resources, particularly at other local schools to overcome shortcomings in the accommodation, especially in physical education. Teachers do not always make the links between subjects clear and improving this would help make the learning more meaningful and interesting to the pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This aspect is outstanding because this is a very caring school which works hard to meet the needs of all pupils. Pastoral care is very strong. All adults know the pupils well and are trusted by them. One girl said about a member of the support staff 'We can tell her anything - she is more like a mother to us.' The school meets all requirements for ensuring that pupils are safe in school. There are excellent assessment arrangements which are used well to analyse progress and set up any necessary extra support where it is required. These arrangements enable teachers to provide good guidance to help pupils academically as well as personally.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The good leadership and management of the school are reflected in the effective teaching and the good standards of achievement. The headteacher provides very strong leadership which is clearly focused on educational matters and raising standards still further. The subject leadership has improved greatly since the last inspection and the staff are now working well together to improve the curriculum and to raise standards further. Detailed monitoring of teaching and of curriculum planning is evident. The school improvement planning is supported by clear, accurate and honest self-evaluation and this leads to appropriate priorities for improvements. The planning document is lengthy but not sufficiently clear about what are the most urgent or important priorities for improvement. It does not reflect how initiatives are intended to have an impact on the national 'Every Child Matters' agenda. The headteacher and staff analyse data in detail to track individual pupils' progress. This information is used very effectively to set appropriately challenging school targets. The governors support and challenge the school well, and carry out their work effectively. The focused visits to school by governors are a particular strength. These help keep governors well informed about the success of the school's work.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ 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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
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

10 January 2007

Dear Children,

Longford Primary School, Longford, Ashbourne, Derbyshire, DE6 3DR

Thank you very much for the way you welcomed me to your school. I really enjoyed my two days, meeting and talking to you all. You helped me find out a lot about how successful your school is.

I would like especially to thank the school council who spent a lot of time telling me the things they liked about school, and those who had lunch with me and looked after me so well.

It is clear that nearly all of you really enjoy being at the school. I think this is because the school is a very caring place where all adults know you all well and do their best for you. You told me that you all feel there is a grown up you could talk to if you have a problem. You are well taught and learn a lot of new things. Your teachers have to work very hard to plan the work, especially in the class with three different age groups. You help your teachers by having such positive attitudes towards school and by being so well-behaved in the lessons. I think it is particularly good that so many of you take part in the after-school clubs, music and sports activities.

There are a few things I think the school can do to make it even better for you. These are:

- Give you more time to write in different subjects and more chances to write imaginative stories and poems.
- Teachers need to plan more links between subjects so you can use your skills in different ways.
- Teachers need to help you be even clearer about exactly what you are learning and about how you will know you have been successful.

Thank you again for your help during the inspection. Enjoy your time at Longford and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms

Lead Inspector