



Longtown Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116705
Local Authority Herefordshire
Inspection number 290605
Inspection date 1 February 2007
Reporting inspector Patricia Potheary

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Longtown
School category	Community		Hereford
Age range of pupils	4-11		HR2 0LE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01873 860239
Number on roll (school)	44	Fax number	01873 860239
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Judy Stone
		Headteacher	David Price
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2003		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Longtown is a small primary school in an isolated hill farming community. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is low. Very few pupils are from ethnic groups other than White British. Pupils come from a wide mix of social backgrounds. The school is part of a local extended schools project. There is a private nursery on site with shared playground facilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Longtown is a well organised and happy school, providing a satisfactory education for pupils. Several aspects of the school are of good quality and the curriculum is outstanding. Pupils enter and leave the school with broadly average standards, and their achievements are satisfactory. This results from satisfactory teaching and learning. Teachers know pupils very well and make lessons enjoyable, but they do not always use pupils' individual targets when planning lessons. This means that most pupils reach expected levels, based upon their ability, but rarely exceed them. Although leadership and management are satisfactory, they do not monitor information at a whole school level sufficiently well to give an accurate overview of how well pupils progress. This has slowed the school's work in improving standards further. Pupils' progress is strongest in mathematics and weakest in writing, although writing is beginning to improve for pupils aged four to seven. Those with learning difficulties do well and receive good, well focused support.

Achievement in Reception is satisfactory and improved teaching is resulting in some recent good progress for this age group. Parents think highly of the school, reporting that their children thoroughly enjoy their time at the school. A strong leadership focus on providing an exceptional range of activities and experiences for pupils prepares them well for the future. For example, despite their location, pupils show a good understanding of the lives and cultures of others. Pupils also make a positive contribution to their local community and their singing is much appreciated by village residents. High quality sporting opportunities, and good support to help pupils eat well, means that most pupils are keen to be healthy. Exceptionally good links with other schools and organisations bring many benefits such as very good progress in physical education and the arts. Pupils thrive in this stimulating environment, one typically reporting that 'School is very good, it teaches you a lot of things.' This, alongside good care, guidance and support, ensures that their personal development and well-being are also good. Pupils' are guided to develop a thorough knowledge of how to keep safe and they report that there is no bullying in the school. As a result behaviour and pupils' attitudes are excellent and they work and play exceptionally well together.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of the information about pupils' progress to ensure that school improvement is clearly focused on raising standards further.
- Improve teaching and learning by strengthening the way teachers plan, using pupils' individual targets to help them reach higher standards.
- Improve pupils' writing skills throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

When pupils join the school their attainment is broadly average. Most pupils reach expected levels for their age each year and leave the school with average standards. Achievement and progress are therefore satisfactory. Further progress is limited by the inconsistent way in which teachers use pupils' individual targets when planning lessons. Achievement in Reception is satisfactory, although, due to recently improved teaching, progress is now good. From this age onwards pupils show stronger skills in reading and mathematics than in writing. A school focus on writing is just beginning to reverse this trend. Progress in information and communication technology (ICT) and science is also satisfactory. Pupils do very well in physical education and the arts, largely due to the high quality opportunities provided. Pupils with learning difficulties generally do well, often reaching national averages because they have good quality support. The school is successful in making sure that no-one falls behind, but is less effective in helping more pupils make good rather than satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There has been a good improvement in encouraging pupils' understanding of other cultures, largely through regular activities with another, more ethnically diverse school. Excellent behaviour is demonstrated in the playground where, each day, a big group of pupils organise a football game with a high degree of co-operation and friendliness. Attendance is average, despite pupils' evident enthusiasm for school, because one or two pupils have a big impact on the figures. Several parents described how much their children 'enjoy going to school'. Attendance at clubs, activities and musical instrument tuition is very high. This reflects the way pupils wholeheartedly embrace the wealth of opportunities the school provides in such a small community. Pupils are well prepared for their futures with, good personal skills, an enthusiasm for hard work, teamwork and enterprise and an understanding of the wider world. This is limited only by sound rather than good basic skills. The responsibilities pupils undertake within the school are satisfactory although they contribute helpful views about the school, and represent the school in sports teams and performances.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In all lessons pupils behave very well and work hard because the quality of relationships between staff and pupils is very good. Teachers and teaching assistants know pupils very well and they assess their work carefully to plan what to teach next. This results in work being matched accurately to pupils' achievements so that everyone makes

expected progress. In classes where ages can span four years, this shows considerable skill. Teachers' use of pupils' individual targets to plan lessons is not so well developed which means, that for some pupils, lessons lack sufficient challenge and progress remains satisfactory rather than good. Teachers provide an interesting variety of activities in lessons and the interactive whiteboard is used to good effect, helping to hold pupils' interest. Pupils show a lot of enthusiasm for the way some subjects are taught, especially mathematics, physical education, art and design and technology.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is very well organised to meet the diverse needs and interests of mixed age classes. This ensures that pupils are able to make expected progress for their age and take part in the full range of subjects. Provision to help pupils keep healthy is very good, especially the amount of sport and exercise, including weekly swimming for everyone. Pupils' experience of the wider world and their development of a broad range of personal skills, benefit considerably from the exceptionally rich array of activities, trips, clubs and projects. Links with other providers are extensive and ensure that the pupils' education is enhanced in every way possible. The Artsmark and Activemark gold awards, summer school, Saturday and after school clubs, to name but a few, all provide pupils with an enthusiasm for education in its widest sense. This outstanding element of the provision is a testament to the skill and dedication of a very small staff.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Thorough procedures safeguard pupils and they feel very safe. There is effective support to help pupils develop good personal skills. Staff work closely with pupils and their families, helping parents to become involved with their child's learning as much as possible. Those with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) or who are vulnerable are given good quality care and guidance, resulting in usually good progress. Arrangements to help pupils settle into school and transfer to the next one are also good, helped by well established links with other schools. Guidance to help pupils reach high standards is currently satisfactory. Staff carefully record and track the progress of each individual pupil and provide additional support where necessary. Pupils have individual targets, and these are set at a challenging level for the first time this year. Despite this, the use of these targets to plan lessons is not fully established and, without this link, achievement is not as good as it could be.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leaders and managers have a strong vision for the school, which is resulting in good provision with some excellent aspects, but they are not focused effectively enough on raising standards further. There is some direction for improving pupils' progress

and the emerging improvements in writing are an example. There have been other positive developments since the last inspection and capacity to improve is satisfactory. The main weakness in leadership and management is in the use of information about pupils' progress to monitor what needs to be improved. The very small cohort numbers does make this difficult, but information, which could indicate trends in progress, is not gathered. Information is monitored at an individual pupil level, but not as a whole school. This means that school self-evaluation lacks rigour and clarity about how well pupils are doing. As a result pupils are not reaching more aspirational levels of achievement.

Good personal development and sound achievement are shared by all pupils and everyone has the opportunity to be included well in activities. Governors are highly committed, experienced and closely involved with the school, but they do not have the information necessary to hold the school sufficiently well to account for pupils' progress.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Thank you for being so welcoming when I visited your school. I very much enjoyed meeting you and joining you for some of your lessons.

I found your school to be happy and caring, helping you to reach expected standards in your work and to make satisfactory progress. It is a good place to learn, just like you and your parents told us it was. You make good progress in your personal skills, behaving extremely well and being responsible in caring for others. Your teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at helping you to do as well as most pupils in other schools and they teach you to a satisfactory standard. You told me that sometimes you could be helped to reach more challenging targets and I have asked your teachers to plan for this more often.

The way you play together and work hard is very good and you clearly enjoy school. I was pleased to see how much exercise you take and how you try to eat in a healthy way. The way you work so well with others and your all round enthusiasm will stand you in good stead for the future. Your teachers see to it that you have an excellent variety of interesting activities to help you develop many skills and interests and to make your work enjoyable. I would like them to give you more opportunities to improve your writing. The school is very successful in keeping you safe and looking after you. Senior staff lead the school effectively. I have suggested that they look in more detail at your progress, to be clearer about what could be improved. It is a pleasure to see that you play a good part in the success of the school.

I wish you all the very best in the future.