



Longton Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119350
Local Authority Lancashire
Inspection number 291391
Inspection dates 23–24 January 2007
Reporting inspector Shirley Herring

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Lane
School category	Community		Longton, Preston
Age range of pupils	4–11		Lancashire, PR4 5YA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01772 612495
Number on roll (school)	250	Fax number	01772 619982
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs M Searson
		Headteacher	Mrs Julie Brown
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 23–24 January 2007	Inspection number 291391
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Longton Primary School is an average sized school serving an affluent, semi rural area. Pupils are predominantly from a White British background and the number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. The headteacher has been in post for just over a term and the school had an associate headteacher for most of the previous term. There are breakfast and after school clubs on site and the school is used by community and church groups some evenings. The school has links with local colleges and with the local cluster of primary schools. There is regular contact with a school in Tanzania and there are exchange visits with pupils from a school in Hungary.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Longton Primary is a satisfactory but improving school with some good features. Personal development is good with pupils developing good attitudes and behaving well. They enjoy coming to school and attendance is good. Pupils are aware of the need for a healthy lifestyle and support the school's action in banning crisps and chocolate. Pupils make a good contribution to the community through collecting for charities and by singing in local events. The school works effectively with other schools in the locality to aid improvements in teaching and learning.

The curriculum is satisfactory with strengths in the provision for music that result in pupils playing and singing to a high standard. There is a good emphasis on literacy and numeracy but there are insufficient opportunities for investigating and solving problems in mathematics and science, particularly to challenge the more able pupils. Subject planning is weak because it doesn't ensure that pupils steadily build on and extend their skills and knowledge as they move through the school. The school is aware of this and a full review is underway. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and children make a sound start in school. Pupils are well cared for, but academic support is not as effective as it should be.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher is the driving force in leading the school's accurate self evaluation and provides a clear educational direction. A unified team has been established who work together in the interest of the pupils. Teaching is satisfactory but varies considerably across the school. In Key Stage 2, it is better in Years 5 and 6 because it is brisk and demanding. Weaknesses in teaching are being addressed through staff training and support from the local authority and this is already helping to raise standards.

Children start school with skills that are above the expectations for their age. They make sound progress in the Reception class and the majority reach the recommended learning goals by the time they enter Year 1 and some exceed them. In Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory and sometimes good progress and standards are above average overall at the end of Year 2 although a below average percentage achieve the higher Level 3. In Key Stage 2, standards in 2006 at Year 6 fell following a period of considerable disruption in staffing. Standards were broadly average, with a below average percentage reaching the higher Level 5. Throughout the school, higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they can, because teachers' expectations have not been high enough and insufficient use is made of assessment information to plan work for different groups. The school is taking steps to remedy this, with support from the local authority, and through links with local schools. The school's most recent assessment information indicates that improvement in progress and standards is occurring for the current year. Inspection evidence supports this assessment.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the use of assessment so that it is used to ensure that all pupils, particularly the more able, achieve as well as they can.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 so that all pupils make good progress.
- Ensure that there is an effective and uniform system of curriculum planning throughout the school to provide continuity, progression and challenge for all pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are usually above average, although more able pupils do not do as well as they should. Children enter the Reception class with skills that are above what is usual for their age. They make sound progress and most children reach, and some exceed, the recommended goals by the time they enter Year 1.

Progress is satisfactory and sometimes good in Key Stage 1. In the 2006 assessments for pupils in Year 2, the number of pupils attaining the expected level was above average, though fewer pupils than could be expected achieved the higher Level 3.

Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 2, though it is more rapid in Year 5 and Year 6 where teaching is more demanding. After some years when standards were above average at the end of Key Stage 2, standards fell in 2006 to broadly average, and the school failed to reach its targets because fewer pupils than expected reached the higher Level 5. This was due in part to considerable disruptions in staffing during the year. The school's assessments for the current year and inspection evidence indicate that progress is improving and standards rising.

More able pupils do not achieve as well as they can because teachers' expectations have not been high enough. The school has taken steps to address this recently and the needs of higher attaining pupils are now included in lesson plans. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive sound support and they achieve at a similar rate to their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development is good. Pupils enjoy their education, feel safe in school and want to learn. They confidently go to the headteacher and staff to discuss their problems. They talk enthusiastically about their experiences and have positive attitudes towards learning. Pupils behave well around school and in class, acting in a sensible and safe manner. They pay good attention to instructions and collaborate very well, for example, when working with 'talking partners'. Although attendance is good, the school is making every effort to make it even better.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Links with schools in Tanzania and Hungary develop pupils' good awareness of other cultures. Pupils are encouraged to discuss how their actions affect others and from an early age children are encouraged to understand their own and others' emotions and needs. Older pupils demonstrate great maturity. They are self-confident and carry out their duties proudly. The introduction of the Children's Job Centre run by Year 6 is an outstanding feature of the school. The Job Centre Managers organise the applications and interviews for the pupils who want to take on additional responsibilities for day-to-day tasks. This project has had a significant impact on pupils' involvement in school life. The school council also has a positive influence on the running of the school.

Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily. Through physical education lessons, which include swimming, they have plenty of opportunities for exercise, which are further enhanced through extra-curricular activities. Their basic skills and economic awareness equip them well for their future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. However, there are considerable variations across the school. Learning is more rapid at the end of Key Stage 1 and in upper Key Stage 2, where teaching is more demanding.

In most lessons, the teacher gives clear explanations and demonstrations so pupils know what to do. Basic skills are taught well so pupils acquire good numeracy and literacy skills. However, work is not always well matched to pupils' needs, in particular more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged and so they do not make the progress of which they are capable. Day-to-day assessment is satisfactory overall but teachers do not use the information sufficiently well to plan work to meet the needs of the individual pupils. The school is currently working with the local authority to develop this aspect though it is too soon to judge the impact.

Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Teachers have recently changed their planning to incorporate a wider range of structured activities, and this is already having a positive impact on learning. For example, the children used their imagination well to act out the Red Riding Hood Story.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum. There is no uniform approach to planning at the moment though the school has started to address this issue. A full review is planned to ensure continuity, progression and that the curriculum is relevant to the specific needs of different groups, for example higher attaining pupils. There is a good emphasis on developing basic skills in literacy and numeracy; however, there are few opportunities for investigative work in science and problem solving in mathematics.

This is one reason why fewer pupils than could be expected reached the higher levels. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, though more could be done to maximise the use of the outdoor play area.

A reasonable range of enrichment opportunities is available at lunchtime, and after school. These are well attended, enjoyed by children and promote their physical and personal development well. Visitors to the school and visits to places of educational interest, including a residential trip, are provided; however, these are limited in lower Key Stage 2. Music provision is a strength of the school, with many of the older pupils taking part in a wide range of musical activities, including the school orchestra and choir. Pupils proudly demonstrate their skills during assembly and in lessons, playing and singing to a high standard.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory. All the recommended procedures to safeguard pupils are in place and they say they feel safe and secure in school. There are good relationships between adults and pupils and so pupils are confident to ask for extra explanations and support in class. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive regular support and so they make similar progress to their peers.

There are new systems in place to give pupils individual academic guidance. Whilst pupils have their own targets to help them improve, not all pupils are fully aware of what they need to do. The sanctions and rewards related to Golden Time are more established and this is having a positive effect on pupils' behaviour. Procedures for tracking pupils' progress are at an early stage of development but are already helping the school to identify where progress is slow and where to give additional support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school experienced significant disruption over the last academic year due to extended staff absence and this had an adverse effect on standards. Since starting in September the headteacher, leading very much by example, has worked closely with staff to monitor and evaluate the work of the school and identify areas for improvement. This honest evaluation is providing an accurate guide to take the school forward. Weaknesses in teaching are being addressed through staff training and the support of the local authority and this has already contributed to some improvement in standards. Links with cluster schools are also helping the school to improve its provision. New measures to reward good work and behaviour have helped to improve pupils' attitudes and self-confidence. Newly appointed subject leaders are beginning to identify ways to improve their subject, though it is too soon to judge the impact on standards.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors are involved in the work of the school and are becoming more aware of the standards achieved by pupils. The school has improved since the last inspection. The impact of unavoidable staff changes has adversely affected the quality of education and standards in the last year or so, but given the recent improvements in the school, it has a satisfactory capacity to improve in future.

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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?	2
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	2
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	3

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	2
The attendance of learners	2
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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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	3
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

Longton Primary School

School Lane

Longton

Preston

Lancashire

PR4 5YA

26 January 2007

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we inspected your school. You are polite and well behaved and work hard in lessons. You told Mr. Barnes how much you enjoy school and that is why you try to come every day.

We think the school council is doing a lot of good work in school. We were also impressed by how well the pupils in Year 6 run The Job Centre; it was good to see so many of you applying for jobs to help in school. Mrs Havard thought this was good experience for when you get older.

You are learning to read, write and calculate well. We would like to see you having more chances to investigate and solve problems in mathematics and science. We were very impressed by your music. You sing and play instruments very well.

We have asked the school to do some things to help you learn even more:

- make sure that those of you who work more quickly have work that makes you really think
- make sure that the pupils in Key Stage 2 do as well as they possibly can
- plan your learning in subjects to make sure you all achieve as well as you can.

Good luck and keep working hard.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Shirley Herring