

Langham CofE (Controlled) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120180
Local Authority	RUTLAND
Inspection number	291657
Inspection dates	6–7 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Paul Weston HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Caroline Dooley
Headteacher	Mrs Janet Lord
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2002
School address	1 Burley Road Langham Oakham LE15 7HY
Telephone number	01572 722676
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small rural school takes pupils from Langham and surrounding towns and villages. It is situated close to the Rutland market town of Oakham. Pupils are mostly from White British backgrounds with few in the early stages of learning English. There is a small group of traveller children. The number of pupils claiming free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and with statements of special educational need is similar to that in most schools. Children enter the school with attainment generally around that expected for their age. A higher than usual proportion of pupils do not spend the full seven years in the school. The school gained the national Activemark Award in 2006.

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 and improving school with several outstanding features. It is a welcoming school that provides and cares well for its pupils. From Reception onwards, pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. High quality personal and academic support helps most pupils to become keen and happy learners. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they have extremely positive attitudes to their work. Attendance is good because pupils enjoy school and want to be there. There are excellent relationships throughout the school and pupils have many opportunities for taking responsibility. The school takes good account of the views of parents and pupils. They hold the school in high regard. One parent said, 'We thank our lucky stars that our child is attending Langham School'; another commented, 'The school is an extremely happy place of learning'.

Teaching is good overall, and in some cases outstanding. Teachers plan carefully to meet differing needs. Teaching assistants give good support, especially when they are working with small groups of pupils. The good curriculum keeps pupils interested, and this is well supported by a wide range of after-school clubs. The school recognises that the next steps are to further continue developing the curriculum by linking subjects together where appropriate. From their starting points in Reception, most pupils make good progress. Consequently, by the end of Key Stage 1, standards are above average. In 2006, most pupils in Year 6 made satisfactory progress resulting in standards that were above average in English and Science, but average in mathematics. The recent focus on reading and mathematics has paid dividends. Analysis of data shows pupils are making rapid gains and now most pupils are making good progress. Standards have risen significantly. The school knows that further improvement is required in writing.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is very committed and has high expectations about what can be done. She provides clear, inclusive leadership and management and is well supported by all staff who share a common sense of purpose. Staff and governors are a caring, dedicated team with a shared commitment to help the headteacher move the school forward. Leaders have a realistic view of strengths and weaknesses through checks on teaching and learning and pupils' achievement. Newly introduced assessment and tracking strategies are helping staff to increase pupils' achievements, particularly in reading and mathematics. They are making better use of information about how well pupils are doing to identify those that need extra help and challenge the more able. However, the school knows that the current tracking system needs simplifying to make it clearer and easier to use. Governors work well with the school and provide good support for its work. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. It provides good value for money and has good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage Grade: 1

'Our son has had an excellent beginning to his education', enthused one parent. Inspectors agree that children get off to a cracking start in the Foundation Stage. When they enter the school, most children are at the expected starting point for their age, although there is some variation year on year. Most children make good progress, but this year it is exceptional. This is due to a number of factors. A smaller than usual group has enabled adults to give more individual attention to each child. Careful planning of creative and interesting activities which take account of children's different needs coupled with excellent teaching have led to rapid

learning gains. Adults continuously and comprehensively assess how well children are doing as a result of the activities provided. The information gained is used well to provide appropriate challenge for different needs. As a result, most are achieving the expected learning goals with many beyond that by the start of Year 1. All areas of learning are covered thoroughly. Children's development is outstanding. The environment is stimulating, calm and orderly. Children are keen to learn and behave well. They treat each other kindly and enjoy taking responsibility for some routines. Children have good opportunities to learn through play inside and out. Their welfare is promoted very well and all requirements are met. There are good links with parents, the on site pre-school group and other early years providers. The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide increased opportunities for pupils of all abilities to write in a variety of ways in other curriculum areas to ensure that better progress is made in writing.
- Develop further appropriate links between subjects so that the curriculum is more thought-provoking, enjoyable and interesting for pupils.
- Simplify the system which tracks pupil progress so that it is clearer and easier to use by all staff.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. By the start of Year 1, most children are meeting or exceeding the expected levels for their age. Most pupils make good progress so that by the end of Year 2 standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, there has been a declining trend in reading in recent years. In 2006 standards in Year 6 were above average in English and science. They were in line in mathematics. Targets were achieved in English but some pupils did not achieve them in mathematics. Most pupils in Key Stage 2, including those with learning difficulties and those in the early stages of learning English, made satisfactory progress. Inspection evidence shows good improvement. The headteacher, supported by her team, has accurately identified areas for improvement and injected greater urgency to improve pupils' progress. For example, following a thorough analysis, staff identified that pupils across the school were not making enough progress in reading and mathematics. As a result of focused teaching and targeted support, pupils are now making better progress. More able pupils are now appropriately challenged and increasing numbers are reaching the higher levels. A small group of traveller children have settled into school well because they are well supported and work is matched to their needs. They are making good progress.

Although writing standards are generally above average, more needs to be done to provide increased opportunities to write in a variety of ways in all other subjects of the curriculum. There are differences in the attainment of boys and girls, although this varies in different year groups. A number of more able pupils transfer into independent schools throughout Key Stage 2.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of pupils are outstanding. Pupils feel valued and secure, enjoy positive relationships and have very good self-esteem. They know what is expected of them and behave very well. Pupils are proud of their school, which they say they enjoy a

great deal. As one child said, 'I love coming every day because I enjoy all the work we do.' Not surprisingly, their attendance is good. Their attitudes to learning are overwhelmingly positive. Pupils work together amicably and cooperatively on shared tasks, willingly undertake responsibilities and enjoy each other's company throughout the day. The work done on promoting pupils' safety is outstanding. For example, it includes teaching them how to avoid injury and about the harmful effects of drugs, alcohol and smoking. A very good range of initiatives helps to promote a healthy lifestyle. Many pupils enjoy a freshly prepared, nutritious meal cooked in the school kitchen. Excellent provision is made for physical exercise. Activities such as 'sensory circuits' get pupils into a good frame of mind at the start of the day and the wide range of clubs helps keep pupils fit and healthy. The school ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely good, fostered by the school's Christian ethos. They respond very well to the wide range of opportunities to learn about and contribute to the local and wider community. The school has high regard for pupils' opinions, sometimes discovered through surveys, and positive action is taken about the outcomes. The school's very successful school council effectively helps pupils to make a positive contribution to school life. All display a strong sense of caring for others and enjoy fund-raising and working with the community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good with some examples of outstanding teaching. Teachers have good subject knowledge and often plan lessons which are imaginative and fun. Learning objectives are made clear to pupils at the start of lessons and reviewed effectively at the end so that pupils know what they can do well and what needs to be improved. During most lessons teachers use good questioning skills linked well to different ability levels so that pupils are able to answer with confidence. Adults give pupils much encouragement and praise, and as a result, pupils' behaviour is excellent and they are keen to do their best. Teaching is especially successful when the pace is quick and purposeful and challenging tasks help pupils to enjoy learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 were totally engrossed and enjoying their study of the characters in Macbeth. Teaching assistants provide good support for groups and contribute well to the work in classrooms.

Teachers use assessment information effectively in monitoring pupils' progress and planning lessons so that the learning needs of pupils are well met. The quality of marking is satisfactory overall and acknowledges effort and achievement, but there are inconsistencies between classes in marking helping pupils to move forward. The presentation of pupils' written work is variable.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. The school's provision focuses well on the needs and interests of all groups of pupils. There are improved opportunities for pupils to develop their information and communication and technology (ICT) skills and this is used well to support the work in classrooms. The programme for physical education is a significant strength. The school has rightly identified the need to make the curriculum more interesting and stimulating by linking some subjects together. In some classes there is too much reliance on worksheets, particularly in science and geography. The school organises an extensive range of enrichment activities.

Many pupils enjoy taking part in a broad range of extra-curricular clubs and educational visits, and they work regularly with visitors who support and extend the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of pastoral care and support is outstanding because there is a strong emphasis on nurturing and developing each individual pupil. All adults who work in school know the pupils well and make the school a secure and exciting place in which to learn. Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that adults will help them with any concerns. Arrangements to ensure pupils' safety and well-being are securely in place and understood by all staff. Pupils are well supported academically because the school has recently improved its procedures for checking their progress and this is beginning to raise standards further. Pupils with special educational needs have well organised individual education plans which help them to make good progress. A good system for setting and reviewing personal and group targets gives pupils a clear understanding of how to improve their work. The school works closely with parents and outside support agencies to ensure that pupils who need extra help receive the necessary support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has quickly established an accurate awareness of what needs to be tackled in order to improve pupils' rate of learning. Her energetic and enthusiastic leadership has pointed the school in the right direction and has already led to many improvements. She is well supported by her senior management team. The school runs smoothly, enabling teachers to focus on pupils' learning. The school makes good use of all of its resources, including staff, who are deployed effectively. The united staff team are keen to bring about change and to do their best for the pupils. There are clear plans for improvement. Many of the actions to raise standards are having a good impact on improving teaching and learning.

Teachers now have the necessary assessment tools to ensure that curriculum planning progressively develops pupils' subject skills. Improved monitoring of pupils' learning means that support can be targeted where it is most needed and pupils are making better progress. However, the current tracking system is too complex. It needs to be simplified so that it is easier to record and analyse the data. Staff are benefiting from well-tailored professional support and development to help them identify, share and develop good practice in teaching and learning. Governors are enthusiastic, supportive and committed to the school. They receive a good range of information about the school and their support in school is valued. They need to have the necessary skills to support the headteacher in driving forward the school and holding it to account. The school has good capacity to improve.

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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>	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	1
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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	2

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.

Annex A

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

8 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Langham CE Primary School, Langham, Oakham, LE15 7HY

Mrs Hackney and I really enjoyed our visit to your school because everybody was so helpful and friendly. Thank you for welcoming us so well. We were very pleased to work with you in your classrooms, join in with your assemblies and watch you play outside. We thought you would like to hear what we thought about your school and how it could get even better.

What we liked about your school:

- Mrs Lord and other adults in the school look after you and make sure everyone behaves well and is happy.
- You behave well and work hard in class. You are friendly and are happy to talk about what you are doing.
- You enjoy lessons because your teachers make lessons interesting and fun. You have lots of interesting activities, sports clubs, trips out of school and visitors into school.
- All adults look after you really well and you say this makes you feel safe and secure in school.
- Your teachers and teaching assistants work hard and try to get it right for each of you.
- Your parents really like the school and think that you learn well.

What we have asked your school to do to make it even better:

- Give you more chances to write in subjects other than English to help you get even better at writing.
- Think of even more interesting and enjoyable ways for you to learn in different subjects by sometimes linking them together.
- Help you get even better by making some of the records that teachers keep, simpler and easier to use.

You can help by working as hard as you can on your reading, writing and mathematics. We feel certain that everyone at the school will continue to work hard to help you learn. You have some challenging targets for 2008. Continue to work hard and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Weston

Her Majesty's Inspector