



Loddon Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121192
Local Authority NORFOLK
Inspection number 292048
Inspection date 31 January 2007
Reporting inspector Michael Madden

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Kitten's Lane
School category	Foundation		Loddon, Loddon
Age range of pupils	7-11		Norfolk NR14 6JX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01508 520392
Number on roll (school)	223	Fax number	01508 528059
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Christopher Boswell
		Headteacher	Mr Paul Powell
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector in one day.

Description of the school

Pupils come mainly from White British families in the small Norfolk market town of Loddon and neighbouring villages. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities is average. The pupils' overall attainment on entering the school is a little above average. A new headteacher joined the staff in June 2006 after a period in which the school had temporary leadership. The school was reorganised in September 2006; prior to this it was a middle school for pupils aged eight to 12. The number of pupils in the school is falling.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is, as the school judges, a satisfactory and improving school. During reorganisation, the new headteacher started a well planned programme to ensure a smooth change from middle-school to junior school status. The new pupils were supported carefully as they joined the school and have settled well.

Standards are a little above average both when pupils enter and when they leave the school, indicating that achievement is satisfactory overall. As some parents rightly believe however, the school's more capable pupils should achieve more. A fresh approach to managing pupils' behaviour is building productive relationships in the school and helping to ensure that pupils' personal development is good. The pupils behave well and their attendance is satisfactory. Most enjoy their education and acquire satisfactorily the skills and qualities needed for the next stage of their education. Many contribute well to the life of the school and to its positive climate for learning.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities are well supported and make good progress. For others, progress is more varied. The younger pupils make mainly good progress but for older pupils, lessons are not all sufficiently demanding because teachers do not have high enough expectations of what they could achieve. The school's curriculum is being modified to meet the needs of the younger pupils and is satisfactory. It includes good additional activities and satisfactory provision for developing pupils' basic skills, but information and communication technology (ICT) is not used enough.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The staff provide sound day-to-day advice and they check that pupils are making progress. The school's assessment arrangements are being improved but are not used enough to provide challenging targets and to advise pupils on how to reach higher standards. Training has brought the staff up-to-date about child protection, but the school's safeguarding arrangements do not fully meet government requirements.

The headteacher has brought to the school accurate self-evaluation and high expectations. His good leadership has directed attention to the right priorities for managing the change of status and for continuing improvement. The school has rightly captured the confidence of parents. Plans are laid, with strong support from well organised governors, for further improvements in the curriculum, teaching and learning, and management. The school is generously staffed. It provides satisfactory value for its relatively high cost but the current level of staffing is not sustainable. The work of the governors is good. They are taking proper steps to reduce the level of staffing and ensure the school's long term viability, and to do so in good time for planning next year's classes. The staff have the capacity to support their ambition and to continue the school's improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure, as a matter of urgency, that the school's safeguarding arrangements fully meet government requirements.

- Complete reorganisation of the staffing to secure the school's long-term viability.
- Improve lesson plans so that they reflect the full ability range in classes and ensure that all pupils get demanding work.
- Use assessment and tracking arrangements to project more challenging targets for higher attainment.
- Extend the use of ICT across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Pupils enter the school with attainment that is a little above average. Thorough analysis of needs, well chosen targets and carefully planned support enable pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities to make good progress. The school's younger pupils make good progress in lessons because their teaching is mostly good. Older pupils' progress is more variable. Standards in science are above average and achievement is good as a result of steady improvements planned by the subject leader. More generally, teachers' expectations are not high enough. As some parents believe, more capable pupils do not learn as much as they could. The overall attainment of the pupils at the end of the key stage is a little above average. The pupils' progress through the key stage is satisfactory. The teachers are beginning to use targets to help more of the pupils, but the targets used are not yet sufficiently challenging.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Attendance is, at 95%, average and satisfactory. Almost all of the pupils understand what is right and wrong, behave well, and take part with interest in occasions such as assemblies. The pupils clearly wish to learn, many enjoy their lessons and, when well engaged by the teaching, they are enthusiastic in their work. Most feel safe in school and are properly concerned for the safety and welfare of others. They are aware of how their health is affected by their decisions and increasingly make wise choices in eating. Many also take a healthy interest in sport and other physical activities. Many contribute willingly to the school community, for example, in a school orchestra, by fund raising for charities or by representing their classes in a school council. Their collaboration in such projects adds much to the school's life and climate for learning, enlarges their understanding of the wider community, and helps to build a sound foundation for their future well-being. Pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Many value music and respond thoughtfully in school assemblies. Some speak of the school with affection. One described it as 'a friendly, homely environment where you feel you belong'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The teachers have sound knowledge, mostly plan engaging activities and have good control of lessons. Teaching assistants and other adults are used well to work with small groups or to support individual pupils and help them achieve well. Lessons are mostly good for the school's younger pupils, who respond well to their teachers' enthusiasm and close attention. At times, older pupils also make good progress; some became deeply interested in a numeracy lesson that was taught with clear and ambitious targets to guide their work. The teachers respond to the pupils' work with encouragement and they are beginning to provide more practical targets to guide further learning. However, teachers' planning does not sufficiently reflect the wide range of needs in the classes. Older and more capable pupils are not challenged and guided enough to learn rapidly and build attainment beyond that of their peers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school's curriculum is satisfactory. It is being revised to reflect the needs and interests of the school's younger pupils and includes each of the required subjects together with French. ICT is taught but not exploited consistently to consolidate computer skills and to support learning in other subjects. Physical education is well supported by visiting coaches from Norwich City Football Club. The curriculum is complemented well by valuable and popular activities and visits. Music is well-developed and much enjoyed by the pupils. Across the school there has been a lively and productive debate about what it is best for the pupils to eat and drink during the school day so that pupils have a good awareness of how to stay healthy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The staff provide good day-to-day care and support through a commitment to including all pupils in the whole life of the school, and through well informed general advice. Daily supervision is sound and is used increasingly well by the staff to help pupils learn from their occasional misbehaviour. Personal development is promoted further through teaching about topics such as safety, health and relationships. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are identified swiftly and enabled to thrive. The school has good links with agencies that help staff and pupils. Pupils' welfare is underpinned strongly by systematic risk assessment and sound child protection arrangements. However, safeguarding arrangements are not yet in line with government requirements. The school's assessment arrangements are improving but, with the notable exception of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities, do not provide sufficiently challenging targets to promote higher standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school is well led by its headteacher, who evaluates teaching, learning and other work of the school accurately. He projects high expectations for all pupils and staff and is constantly striving to improve the environment for learning. Reorganisation of the staff to reflect the school's new status is not yet complete. The level of staffing is unusually high and job descriptions and formal arrangements for monitoring are not fully established. There are, however, sound plans for further improvements in management as well as in the curriculum, teaching and learning. The emerging junior school has rightly captured the confidence of the large majority of parents. Governors are well organised, determined, keen for the school to focus more closely on pupils' learning, and they support the headteacher strongly. Across the staff, enthusiasm for change varies but many are adapting well to the school's new direction. Their energy and ideas provide increasingly strong support for the headteacher's work and show that the staff have the capacity to continue establishing and enhancing the school. Standards are not yet rising, but speedy improvement means that the school is providing satisfactory value for its relatively high cost. With fewer pupils the level of staffing must be reduced for the school to survive. Governors are wisely taking the required steps so that staffing and responsibilities can be decided in good time to plan next year's classes and curriculum.

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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 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	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	3

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	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	2
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

1 February 2007

Dear Children,

Loddon Junior School, Kitten's Lane, Loddon, Norfolk NR14 6JX

I visited your school a little while ago to find out how well you are taught and looked after. Thank you for making me welcome and for answering my questions. You and your parents like the school and I agree that it does some things well. What I found good about your school included the way:

- Your headteacher, Mr Powell, and the teachers are changing your school.
- You behave well, help your teachers and help each other.
- Those of you in Year 3 and Year 4 enjoy your work.
- Some of the older pupils are really interested in their numeracy work.
- Your Year 5 and Year 6 school councillors were so keen to tell me about the school.
- Your musicians play so many different instruments while you sing.
- You all listened in assembly to the "telephone messages from non-humans"!

Mr Powell and the governors are working hard and have already made a lot of difference to the school. I have asked them to do a few more things to make your school a really good one:

- To get some of their records completely up to date.
- To decide soon about classes and teachers for next year.
- To make sure you all get hard enough work in your lessons.
- To tell you more about how to make your work as good as possible.
- To make sure you use computers more often.

I enjoyed my time at the school very much. I hope you will go on working well with your teachers and behaving as well as you did during my visit. Thank you again.

With good wishes

Michael Madden Lead Inspector