



Longnor CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123482
Local Authority Shropshire
Inspection number 292682
Inspection date 9 November 2006
Reporting inspector Anthony Dobell

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Frodesley Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Longnor
Age range of pupils	4-11		Shrewsbury SY5 7PP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01743 718493
Number on roll (school)	104	Fax number	01743 718493
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Tim Corbett
		Headteacher	Mike Betts
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small primary school serves local villages, although a significant number of pupils come from a wider area because their parents choose this school. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds and no pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) is above average, as is the proportion with statements of special educational need, because many of their parents opt for this school. When they enter Reception, children's levels of understanding cover a wide range, but are average. The school benefits from an attractive rural site.

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 with some outstanding features. Pupils achieve very well in relation to their starting points and capabilities in Years 1 and 2 and they maintain consistently good achievement in Years 3 to 6. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties is excellent. The rich curriculum and challenging teaching are key factors in the very good overall progress made by pupils from the Reception class onwards. Standards in the national tests are above average at the end of Years 2 and 6.

The strengths of teaching include its consistent good quality across the school, with evidence of outstanding practice, and the very careful match of work to pupils' needs. The school has put considerable thought into organising its mixed-age classes, with very positive results. Pupils learn effectively and progress is brisk in all age groups. Parents are very supportive and pupils confirm that they enjoy school and find their work challenging. One said to an inspector, 'It is fun as well as hard work.'

The school has a very good understanding of its strengths and areas for development, although its judgements are sometimes too modest. If a relative weakness is identified, the school responds quickly and very effectively. For example, there was a dip in the Year 6 English results in 2005. The school introduced initiatives to improve teaching and learning in English and results in 2006 improved significantly and put the school back on track for very effective improvement.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding because of the excellent quality of care provided by the school. Pupils are valued for what they can offer. As a result, they quickly become confident in their own abilities. They develop an extremely positive self-image and really enjoy their learning. Pupils have full understanding of their current levels of work and of their targets for improvement. They particularly appreciate the school's provision outside the school day and the rich environment around the school. Pupils benefit very much from the extended opportunities for learning that these provide and their skills development is promoted very successfully. One said, 'We have a forest school area, it helps you to develop design and technology skills and social skills'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, but their understanding of life in a culturally diverse society is less well developed than other areas. They feel that their views could be taken into account more through the school council.

The overall quality of leadership and management is good and there are several significant strengths. The school provides pupils with a rich education because the headteacher gives imaginative and sensitive but challenging leadership. He is fully supported by all adults in the school and by the governing body. All are fully committed to nurturing every pupil and enabling them to achieve their potential. The work of the school is checked extremely thoroughly to ensure resources are used to the maximum benefit for the pupils. The school has improved well since its previous inspection and has a well-demonstrated capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Help pupils to have a clearer understanding of life in a culturally diverse society.
- Develop the role of the school council so that pupils have better opportunities to express their views.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From 2001 to 2005, standards in the national tests at the end of Year 2 were significantly above average. In these tests at the end of Year 6, standards were above average from 2002 to 2005. Standards were not at their usual level in English in 2005, which was in part due to more pupils having learning difficulties in the Year 6 class compared with other years. The school analysed the results carefully and made some very successful changes to regain the above-average level of earlier years. Increased challenge was introduced to the targets for different types of writing, including writing in subjects such as history and geography. These measures were effective and standards in English and science improved markedly in 2006.

Children enter Reception with average levels of understanding. They make spirited progress and reach above average standards by the time they join Year 1. Pupils maintain their brisk progress in Years 1 to 6. The pupils' particular needs are well known to the staff and any difficulties they have are quickly identified and addressed. Pupils are supported sensitively whilst expectations for their progress are high. The achievement of those with learning difficulties is outstanding because their work is highly motivating, but also challenges them most appropriately. The few pupils with profound learning difficulties are taught with impressive skill and this enables them to make steady and certain progress. The firm focus on individual needs means all pupils develop effective skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). One pupil said, 'Teachers are nice even though they make you work very hard'.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Attendance is well above average, showing how much pupils enjoy school. Pupils explain that they enjoy school because they feel safe and secure. One said, 'It's a safe school and you get to know people quickly'. Behaviour is excellent both in class and at play. Pupils support each other sensitively. Pupils have a very clear understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle, regular exercise and keeping safe. They are well involved in the local community and the school is alert to opportunities to increase this involvement. The school accepts that the role of the school council could be developed to give pupils a stronger voice in school life. Pupils' highly developed skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT equip them very well for the next stage of their education and their future lives.

Pupils' moral and social development is excellent and they have a clear appreciation of the joys of their world. They have a very good understanding of different religions and of western culture, but their understanding of life in a culturally diverse society is less secure.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils' consistently good progress is rooted in imaginative and challenging teaching. The use of outdoor facilities – the 'forest school' – is a major strength and pupils appreciate the extra skills which this brings. For example, older pupils were making bows and arrows in preparation for recreating the Battle of Shrewsbury. Practical learning of this sort and the skilful linking of subjects help pupils to feel that their work is relevant and purposeful. It creates good opportunities for independent learning and for pupils to manage their own activities. For example, a group of older girls are running their own dance club.

Effective teaching benefits from the fact that all pupils are very well known to all adults. This enables all pupils to be given targeted support, which increases their confidence and self-belief so that they make good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported very effectively by teachers and teaching assistants so that they make excellent progress. Progress is promoted by effective marking of work that shows pupils how to improve further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school's curriculum is outstanding and meets all requirements. Pupils' learning and personal needs are met exceptionally effectively by a rich balance of academic and practical work. This motivates all pupils and supports their high achievement. One pupil summed this up, 'We do nice stuff here and we learn a lot'. Very good links with outside organisations and visits out, together with visitors to the school, help learning to come alive. Pupils appreciate the clubs and activities provided, for example, opportunities to grow and then sell produce from the school garden. All these activities encourage initiative and independence.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for all pupils. They and their parents appreciate this and this is a major reason why parents from outside the immediate area choose this school. One pupil summarised, 'People have respect for you and teachers listen to you'. Pupils' academic progress is tracked by thorough and detailed systems. These enable the school to set realistic and challenging targets for groups and individuals. Pupils are fully aware of these and are able to explain how

they are helping them to raise their standards. Very good links with external agencies mean that pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, have access to specialised support where this is needed.

Excellent care and support help to promote pupils' self-confidence and self-belief. This is reinforced when achievements are shared and celebrated. This positive self-image underpins pupils' impressive progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's success stems from the headteacher's highly effective leadership. He is passionate for all his pupils to attain the highest standards that they can. He ensures that there are high levels of care in school and that pupils all learn effectively, whatever their needs. He has the full support of staff and governors. There is a strong sense of teamwork in the school that ensures long-term planning for improvement is shared successfully. The focus on pupils' achievement and how they can improve is marked.

Teachers are alert to opportunities to link subjects to make learning more meaningful, although there is scope to develop this further. There is excellent analysis of the school's performance based on outstanding procedures to monitor the school's performance and astute planning to overcome any weaknesses. Governors are willing and able to question and challenge to ensure decisions are made carefully. They ensure that the school uses its resources as effectively as possible to provide pupils with the many very good opportunities to build knowledge, skills and understanding at a brisk rate.

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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?	1
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	1

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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	2
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?	1
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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

Thank you for welcoming us into your school, being so polite and friendly, and telling us about your learning and your lives in school. We think that yours is a good school with many strengths.

What we found that the school does well

- You make very good progress because you try very hard with your work.
- You have a very good understanding of how well you are doing and how you can improve.
- Teachers try very hard to make lessons interesting and you particularly enjoy the 'forest school'.
- You enjoy school, behave very well and are kind to each other.
- All adults take very good care of you and help you to improve.
- You know how important it is to keep safe and healthy.
- Your headteacher and teachers are trying very hard to make your school even better.

What we have asked the school to do

- We have asked the school to help you to understand more clearly about life in a country with a range of cultural traditions.
- We have asked the school to develop the work of the school council so that you can contribute more to life in school.

We enjoyed our day in your school very much and wish you well for the future.