

Langley First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108591
Local Authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	301957
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Brian Blake HMI

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	347
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Lorna Wiseman
Headteacher	Mrs Judy Williams
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2003
School address	Langley Avenue West Monkseaton Whitley Bay Tyne and Wear NE25 9DF
Telephone number	0191 2008712
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Age group	3–9
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Langley First School, which is larger than average in size, serves an area with average levels of prosperity. The vast majority of pupils are White British, with a very small number from other minority ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. Although the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need is above average, overall, there are fewer than average numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The local authority support two initiatives in the school; one is for children from Reception to Year 4 with physical difficulties, and the other for Nursery children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who require greater assessment and support than is normally provided at this age. The local authority provides the school with funding for staff training, additional resources and personnel to support these targeted children.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Langley First School is an outstanding school. The children who start in the Nursery at three years of age develop quickly into confident and able learners, so that by the time they are ready to begin the start of statutory schooling, their skills and abilities in the six areas of learning are above the levels expected nationally, with particular strengths in the two core areas of language and literacy and mathematical development. This good start to school continues throughout Key Stage 1 so that by the time the pupils take the national tests at the end of Year 2, they achieve standards that are exceptionally higher than average. This level of achievement has been seen year-on-year since the previous inspection of the school. Having started Year 3, the beginning of Key Stage 2, with such high standards, it is an outstanding achievement that the pupils maintain the level and quality of their work throughout Years 3 and 4, while also continuing to develop their personal skills and attributes. By the time the pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, they are well-rounded, confident and very able young people who are achieving very high standards.

The progress and confidence of the pupils stem from a caring, safe and stimulating school, within which teaching is outstanding, and pupils are treated with great respect. The development of their personal attributes accounts for their very positive attitudes to school, peers and adults. Their ability to self-assess their work, and that of others, is a sign of the independence that is helping the pupils to mature into sensible, well behaved and tolerant individuals. Although these qualities are consistently seen in different classes throughout the school, the current role of the school council has yet to reflect this independence in decision-making in different aspects of life at the school.

The headteacher is a driving force in making the school successful, but she works in a very collaborative way with all staff. The collegiate approach to leadership and management is very successful, and all staff play a full and active part in helping the school to achieve all that it does. Senior managers know the strengths and weaknesses of the school very well, with the school development plan clearly indicating the areas for future action. The school's vision is genuinely inclusive of all who work, attend or visit the school. Governors play their part in helping the school to move forward, and recent changes in the way they carry out their responsibilities means that, overall, there is outstanding capacity for future improvement. With outcomes and provision outstanding, the school achieves very good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage Grade: 1

The overall effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is outstanding. When the children start in the Nursery they show the broad levels of personal skills and attributes expected for their age. The overall quality of provision across the Foundation Stage is excellent, with learning activities that are well targeted on key learning goals that match well with the children's stage of development. Outstanding teaching also makes a significant contribution to the quality of education provided, helping the children to settle into school quickly, develop personally and socially, and make good overall progress during their time in the Nursery and Reception classes. The children work in a caring, safe and stimulating learning environment. By the time they are ready to start school at five years of age, the vast majority of children have reached above the levels expected nationally in all areas of learning, but particularly impressive work is seen in language and literacy, and mathematical development. Leadership and management are effective and ensure that teachers work well together, planning sensibly to build on the children's prior

experience and identified learning needs. Young children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good overall progress because of the targeted and specialist adult support available.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop further the role of the school council, particularly the range of independent and autonomous decision-making opportunities available to them.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Overall standards are exceptionally high and achievement is outstanding. The vast majority of children start at the school in Nursery with of range of skills that are broadly what would be expected for that age of child. During the Foundation Stage, the children make good progress across all the areas of learning so that by the time they reach the start of statutory schooling, the majority are reaching above the levels expected for a five year old child. This above average standard is maintained throughout Key Stage 1, so that by the end of the Key Stage in Year 2, children's standards are exceptionally high in reading, writing and mathematics. In Years 3 and 4, the children maintain their rate of progress so that they leave school at the end of Year 4, half way through Key Stage 2, with very high standards overall, particularly in writing. Despite pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieving below the standards of the majority of children, their overall progress is similarly outstanding.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding, and by the time the children leave the school in Year 4 they are well-rounded, confident and articulate individuals who have a clear idea of their self-worth, their own and others' achievements. Pupils enjoy school, talking enthusiastically about their work, friends and the staff. Attendance is good and above the national average. The pupils are proud of their school and of its achievements. They have a strong sense of belonging to the school community and feel confident within it; their behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are well motivated, feel valued and respected, and are enthusiastic to learn. Feeling safe has never been an issue for the pupils because they know that staff support and care for them exceptionally well. Pupils make decisions and take responsibility; for example, when they assess their own and others' work. They also accept responsibility on a day-to-day basis when they take part in the many opportunities to provide help and support to others, including local community groups and charities.

Although there are opportunities for pupils on the school council to be involved in some decision-making activities about the school, this has not yet developed into a fully independent and autonomous role. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is outstanding and reflects the ethos of a caring and supportive school. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong, respect for themselves, others and their environment. Cultural development is enhanced through arts activities and the range of visits that pupils make. Pupils understand how to keep themselves healthy by making sensible choices about their diet and exercise.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding because the pace of challenging and interesting lessons motivates pupils to listen well and concentrate, which contributes to pupils' outstanding progress and exceptionally high standards. Teachers, throughout the school, explain and demonstrate well; giving pupils very clear instructions about what they are going to learn and what is expected of them by the end of a lesson. The increasing use of interactive whiteboards makes learning fun, and in many lessons observed by inspectors, pupils confidently used the boards in whole-class plenary sessions or independently of the teacher. Teachers question pupils very effectively to promote discussions and pupils enjoy these opportunities to share ideas directly with the teacher or the whole class. The overwhelming majority of pupils speak clearly and accurately, and show respect by listening carefully to others' views. Lessons are well planned and prepared, with good levels of challenge for pupils of different abilities. Assistants and teachers work well as a team and provide very good support for all pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A particular strength, throughout the school, is the marking of the pupils' work. The relevant and supportive comments assist pupils' understanding and ensure that they know exactly what they have to do to improve their work. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are also encouraged to make accurate self-assessments of their work using a 'traffic light' system, which allows them to indicate their relative understanding of what has been taught. Pupils are increasingly using this initiative to let their teachers know when they need extra help and support. Targeted support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The outstanding curriculum, which is very well organised, places strong emphasis on the core skills of literacy and numeracy and ensures that exceptionally high standards are maintained year-on-year. The use of innovative technology, for example, the school-based 'portal' website for pupils to upload and access their own work from lessons, as well as teacher information and guidance, is being used to effectively support learning across the curriculum. The school has recently achieved the Artsmark Gold award, and evidence of pupils' outstanding work adorns classrooms and corridors. An extensive range of activities enrich the learning opportunities in and out of lessons and helps to broaden the educational experiences of the pupils beyond normal school hours. These extensive learning opportunities have a major, positive influence on the attitudes of pupils to school and their work. Regular visits to places of local interest are used for practical on-site learning, which helps to motivate and stimulate pupils' interest in their work. Year 4 pupils' participation in a residential visit adds an extra dimension to helping them mature and extend further their learning outside of school. The school makes very good use of adults with specific expertise to enhance the teaching of different subjects. Special events, including an 'arts week' and a multi-disciplinary approach during a 'healthy school's event' adds to pupils' enjoyment of school and provides them with a range of activities to increase their understanding of healthy living. Large numbers of pupils participate in an extensive range of extra-curricular activities on offer.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. Pupils feel well cared for because the school works hard to know every pupil as an individual. This approach, alongside very good pupil tracking, means that the staff know when to give the right level of challenge and support, and helps to ensure that the pupils do the best they can in all their work. The school also works well with external partners, including the local authority, to ensure that specialist support is well matched to the needs of those pupils who receive it. The pupils are well informed about their achievements because the quality of the academic guidance that they receive is outstanding. The pupils know what they have learned and also the next steps they need to take to meet their well-known, personal learning targets. The pupils, themselves, make a significant contribution to the marking of each others' work, which helps to develop their appreciation and understanding of others' efforts. Clear and fully compliant procedures are in place with regard to child protection and health and safety.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The exceptional leadership of the headteacher provides strong and thoughtful direction for the work of the school, within which the inclusion of all pupils is central to its vision. The headteacher embraces new and very effective initiatives, including the use of assessment for learning, and ensures that staff are well prepared to implement any new developments. This has contributed to the school maintaining exceptionally high standards since its previous inspection. The strong ethos of shared leadership involves staff in joint decision-making and enables managers, at all levels, to be well prepared to lead in their area of responsibility. Planned opportunities for managers to share expertise, organise staff development, evaluate the quality of planning and scrutinise pupils' work in books and in classrooms make for a consistent approach in almost all aspects of the school's work. Such a collegiate approach to leadership and management clearly shows through the outstanding curriculum and teaching and learning, and pupils' enthusiasm for attending and doing well at school. The school improvement plan accurately assesses the key priorities and actions needed to bring about future improvements. Governance is good. Governors are well informed and know what is happening in the school. They are well involved in the life of the school and evaluate satisfactorily the work of subject leaders and other aspects of school life. They support initiatives and, over the last year, have begun to develop their role as 'critical friend', through challenge and showing good awareness of the standards and progress that the pupils make at the school.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
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	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
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	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	1
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?	1
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
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

25 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Langley First School, West Monkseaton, NE25 9DF

You will know that I recently visited your school with two other inspectors to find out how well you are all doing at Langley First School. I am sure that it will not surprise you to know that you attend an outstanding school, which offers a quality of support and guidance that helps all of you to do the very best that you can. Because of this, and the outstanding teaching that you get throughout the school, you make outstanding progress and reach standards that are much higher than average. All of you play a very big part in the success of the school; not least by the way you behave, play and support each other, in and out of lessons. We were very impressed with everything that we saw. We want you all to continue doing as well as you can, and we have already told your teachers about this so that they continue to provide you with stimulating and enjoyable lessons. Although we were pleased with everything you said, we are going to ask the staff to help your school council to develop further what they do, particularly so that they can act more independently and make decisions that will help the school get even better than it is now.

On behalf of all the inspectors, I wish all of you every success in the future.

Brian Blake

Lead Inspector