

Longlands Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 101429 |
| Local Authority | Bexley |
| Inspection number | 307681 |
| Inspection date | 20 May 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Selwyn Ward |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4-11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 308 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr M W C Chambers |
| Headteacher | Mrs F Dear |
| Date of previous school inspection | 8 November 2004 |
| School address | Woodside Road Sidcup DA15 7JG |
| Telephone number | 020 8300 2368 |
| Fax number | 020 8302 0540 |

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|--------------------------|-------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and particularly investigated the progress pupils make and the impact of measures taken by school leaders to improve provision and raise standards. The inspector met with pupils, and some of the staff and governors. Parts of some lessons were observed, parents' questionnaires and a sample of pupils' work were examined and school information, including self-evaluation, was scrutinised. The inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This school is larger than average. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties, including several pupils with autism. For the past four years, the school has run a breakfast club before the start of the school day. Older children join the Reception classes in the September term, but others join in January and so have only two terms in the Reception Year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Longlands Primary is a good school. A parent summed up the views of many in saying, 'My child has been given a good all-round education'. Parents are especially pleased with the good start their children get off to in the Reception Year. They commend the school's good curriculum, which stimulates pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Through an exciting range of visits and some lively themed weeks, teachers succeed in, as another parent commented 'making learning fun and interesting', although some parents express concern about the impact of Year 6 revision in narrowing the curriculum in the pupils' final year at the school.

Pupils' personal development is good. They greatly enjoy school and feel safe and well looked after in what they describe as a 'caring and friendly place'. Although some parents voice concerns over bullying incidents, children confirm that they feel safe and that any acts of unkindness are dealt with well by the school. Behaviour is good and pupils are attentive in lessons. Many take part enthusiastically in the wide range of sports on offer, although the school has fewer trophies to show for its sporting prowess than in some past years. Pupils certainly have a good appreciation of the need for a healthy diet. They are quick to explain just what is meant by the 'five-a-day' guideline on fruit. Pupils grow in confidence through the increasing responsibility they take as they move up the school. Although, at the time of the inspection, Year 6 pupils were away on their annual residential trip, those in the younger classes were very clear about all the monitor roles their older friends take on within the school community. Pupils' mature attitudes, and the progress they make in developing their key literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills, prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

Pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. This is because they have helpful individual targets and because they generally benefit from good guidance through marking. In lessons, they know and can usually explain what they are doing, but their opportunities to assess their own progress are sometimes limited by the narrow way in which the purpose for the lesson is set out. Although teachers routinely refer to setting 'learning objectives' at the start of each lesson, too often these are merely the tasks that pupils are to carry out rather than what it is that the pupils are expected to learn from the experience.

Standards are above average in both the Year 2 and Year 6 national tests. In the past, pupils have generally done better in English and science than in mathematics. There is evidence, however, that measures taken by school leaders to boost performance in mathematics are proving effective. The inspection came just after Year 6 had completed their 2008 national tests but before results were in. However, the school's records of pupils' progress, and their 'mock' tests earlier this year, show them to be on track to do very much better in mathematics and reach more challenging targets.

Although close to a third of the pupils pass the Bexley '11 plus' selection test, past national test scores show that more able pupils have not always made as much progress as they should. Again, the school's records show an improving picture as a result of teachers more closely matching work to pupils' abilities. Autistic pupils, and others with learning difficulties, make good progress because of the good support they get from teaching assistants.

Pupils achieve well because teaching and learning are good. School leaders monitor teaching regularly. They identify that teaching is effective because relationships are good and teachers typically motivate their pupils to try hard and do their best. Classes are managed well and teachers' expectations have evidently risen as they have increasingly set pupils more challenging

work. School leaders' otherwise thorough monitoring is less explicit in formally recording the points for development reported to staff so that they can be sure that these are followed up in subsequent observations. Nevertheless, in this well run school, the headteacher, leadership team and governors succeed in making the best of the cramped classrooms and facilities. They have an accurate picture of the school's effectiveness. The improvements that have followed from the measures taken to boost pupils' progress show the school's good capacity for continued improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Reception children receive a good education. Parents are pleased at how 'happy and settled' their children are. Children start school with a wide-range of capabilities but their skills and abilities are generally above those expected for their ages. They achieve well over the two or three terms that they have in the Foundation Stage. Standards are above those expected of five-year-olds by the time the children start Year 1, so that parents say they are 'more than happy' with their children's progress. Children make particularly good progress in their social development and in their language and communication skills. Children have opportunities for physical development, playing, for example, on large wheeled vehicles, but they are hampered by the limited space. The outside area is very tight and this limits the opportunity for children to have a free choice of when to play there.

What the school should do to improve further

- Enable pupils to be more involved in assessing their own progress by ensuring that the objectives set out at the start of lessons identify clearly what pupils are expected to learn.
- When observing lessons, make a more formal record of points for improvement that can be shared with the teacher and followed up on subsequent observations.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 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

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|--|---|
| 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? | 2 |

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

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| 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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 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

29 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Longlands Primary School, Sidcup, DA15 7JG

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to visit your school. The members of the school council who I spoke to told me they thought Longlands is a good school. I agree. It is a school where you are doing well, and I was pleased to see that standards are rising in mathematics and that more of you reached the higher grades when you took your 'mock' tests. Let's hope the real results are at least as good when they arrive soon.

The children in the Reception classes get off to a good start and you are now all making good progress too as you move through the school. This is because the teaching is good. I was pleased to see that those of you I spoke to knew their targets. I am sure you will continue to work hard to achieve them. I have asked the school to look carefully at the learning objectives that teachers set out at the start of each lesson. If these identified clearly what you are expected to learn, rather than just what you are expected to do in the lesson, then that would make it easier for you to judge for yourselves and tell your teachers how well you are learning and making progress.

The school takes good care of you and it is helping you to grow in confidence. You behave well and get on well with each other. You also especially enjoy the fun things the school organises like the themed weeks and trips. Yours is a well run school, but I have asked the headteacher and other staff to make sure that when they come to visit lessons they write down the things they spot that could help you make even better progress. That way they can be sure to follow these points up when they next come into class.

Yours sincerely,

Selwyn Ward

Lead Inspector