

Langtons Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102280
Local Authority	Havering
Inspection number	307957
Inspection date	24 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Nicola Davies

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	245
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs D Thorogood
Headteacher	Mrs J Gilbert
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2004
School address	Westland Avenue Hornchurch RM11 3SD
Telephone number	01708 447866
Fax number	01708 457051

Age group	4-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated whether pupils are sufficiently challenged in mathematics, how well pupils are guided to make good progress and the impact of curriculum changes on teaching and learning. Evidence was gathered from the analysis of pupils' test results, scrutiny of samples of their work, observation of lessons, parents' questionnaires, discussions with the headteacher and staff, chair of governors and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but 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 this report.

Description of the school

This is a three form entry infant school in Hornchurch. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is much lower than average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

In the accurate words of one parent, 'Langtons is a well respected school which has strong leadership and a cohesive team of staff all working towards the same vision'. This good school has a number of outstanding features to its work. One particularly successful aspect is the very good teaching of literacy from the Foundation Stage onwards. This means that pupils consistently attain high standards in reading and writing by the time they leave the school. Their very good literacy skills along with the many opportunities they have to take responsibility within the school and learn about life outside school helps them to become very confident and effective communicators. They respond very well to the school's firm and friendly ethos which encourages their efforts very well. As they say, 'Our teachers always say we can do better than that'. As a result, Langton's courteous young pupils are extremely well prepared for the next phase of education.

Pupils use their language and literacy skills well across the good curriculum. For example, the school has recently introduced a new approach to work in subjects such as history and science. These subjects are now taught through half termly themes that enable pupils to study different aspects of the theme in depth. This major initiative has only been in place for just over a term, but is already proving popular with teachers and pupils. Pupils produce written work of a good standard, for example comparing the famous nurses Mary Seacole and Florence Nightingale. They also thoroughly enjoyed 'going into role' as Victorian children and sampling the strict discipline of the Victorian classroom.

Leaders at the school have fully taken on the 'Every Child Matters' agenda. This means that they have worked successfully to ensure that children enjoy their education a good deal. Good systems exist to keep children safe and the school takes regular soundings from pupils through its 'Happiness Surveys' to highlight any improvements they could make. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles. They take part enthusiastically in physical exercise in lessons and through the fun playtime activities the school organises. They talk knowledgeably about the benefits of healthy eating. In addition, initiatives such as the annual Health and Well Being Fair promote good health and inform pupils and parents alike. Such work with local health agencies is just one example of the excellent partnership work the school undertakes. Another is the school's partnership with parents. 'I am always impressed by all of the staff, teaching and non teaching, their caring attitude towards pupils and parents and the constant effort made to continue a strong relationship between all three' was one parent's approving comment. Staff take very good care of pupils and are alert to the needs of children with particular medical difficulties. For example, one parent commented on how helpful her child's individual health care plan had been.

One area that the school has identified for further development has been mathematics. Whilst results are consistently well above national averages not all pupils make as good progress in this subject as they do in reading and writing. For example, in 2007, fewer children reached higher levels in the subject than in reading. The school has already made a start in investigating why this is so. Work carried out to date includes a review of mathematics teaching and learning across the school. Another initiative was a very popular meeting, attended by over 100 parents, to share the school's approach to teaching mathematics and to explain how parents can help. The school has also improved the way that it tracks pupils' progress and provides feedback. The school has correctly identified that pupils do not consistently have good opportunities to work independently and to develop their investigative and problem solving skills in mathematics.

Work to address this is underway but it is too soon to see the full impact of these changes in the progress that pupils make.

The school is well led and managed. The committed and popular headteacher has worked very well with staff to make significant improvements to the quality of the education that the school provides. One way she has achieved this is through successfully encouraging staff and governors to become much more involved in evaluating and monitoring the work of the school. For example, since the time of the previous inspection staff have taken greater responsibility for improving different subjects. This system is to be further strengthened this year by linking it to monitoring and evaluation within different year groups. Governors too now make a good contribution to school improvement. They evaluate and monitor the work of the school at regular intervals through planned visits and formal links with members of the teaching staff. Another area of success has been attendance. This has improved year on year since the time of the previous inspection and is now broadly average. Although in its early days, a new initiative is further reducing the level of absence caused by term time holidays. This successful track record of improvement and the good participation of staff at all levels provides the school with its good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get a good start to their education in the three Reception classes that make up the Foundation Stage of this school. Although not physically located together, the staff team work well to share their planning and their best ideas for the benefit of the children. They also work well with parents and take good care of their pupils. One successful example is how staff make flexible arrangements each year to introduce new children to the setting and routines. Consequently, many parents commented how quickly their children had settled in to their reception classes and how enthusiastically they enjoyed their 'learning through play'. This takes place through both focused adult led activities and more independent activities where children take a lead in their own learning. As a result, children who generally join the Foundation Stage with the expected skills and experiences for their age, make good progress and some make very good progress. A weaker area of provision is children's access to high quality outdoor learning. Although children have access to outdoor areas during the day, these are not available during wet weather, nor are children able to use these areas independently. As a result, the outdoor curriculum is restricted in comparison to the good opportunities children have for learning in the indoor environment. Children thoroughly enjoy their time in the reception classes, develop a good level of personal and social skills and are well prepared for their move 'up' to school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure pupils have good opportunities to learn independently in mathematics.
- Improve opportunities for outdoor learning in the Foundation Stage.

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Annex A

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
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	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?	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

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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
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

04 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Langtons Infant School, Hornchurch, RM11 3SD

Thank you so much for spending time with me when I visited your school a little while ago. I really enjoyed talking to you and your teachers. I was only able to visit for one day so I wasn't able to see everything you do, but your teachers had told me a lot about your school before I visited. They are very proud of you and the school that you make together. Some of the really good things about the school are:

- you help the school a lot and are very grown up
- you know lots about being healthy and try very hard to keep fit
- you learn to read and write very well
- your teachers and all the adults take very good care of you.

Your teachers work hard to make sure Langtons is a good school. They listen to your ideas, and to those of all the adults. One of the things they want to do is make sure you do just as well in your numeracy lessons as in your literacy lessons. They plan to give you more chances to solve problems, investigate things and make choices. This is a good idea.

I have asked them to make sure that when you are in the reception classes, you can learn lots outdoors as well as indoors. This is a bit tricky with the space that you have, but your teachers are thinking hard about how they can do this.

I know what good readers you are in Year 2 so I am sure you will be able to read this letter to any of the pupils who aren't quite as good as you yet.

Best wishes for your continued success,

Nicola Davies

Lead Inspector