

Long Furlong Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123085
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	314489
Inspection date	5 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Mike Thompson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	258
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Neil Price
Headteacher	Miss Natasha Austin
Date of previous school inspection	31 March 2003
School address	Boulter Drive Abingdon OX14 1XP
Telephone number	01235 532358
Fax number	01235 539692

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Long Furlong is an average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage, and are generally from advantaged home circumstances. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well below the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Long Furlong is a good school with some outstanding features. It is effective because it has good leadership and management, good teaching, a well-planned curriculum, and provides excellent quality of care for its pupils. Particularly noteworthy is the school's outstanding provision for promoting the personal development of its pupils.

Children are given a good start in the Foundation Stage classes. They are provided with a rich diet of interesting and challenging activities, and their development in learning is closely monitored.

Achievement is good overall. From average starting points in the Nursery, children make good progress to reach standards that are just above average by the time they move to Year 1. This good progress continues in Key Stage 1, and standards are securely above average by the end of Year 2. However, higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 do not do as well as they should in writing. This has been highlighted by the school as a key area for improvement, and a range of measures is in place to help ensure that they do better in the future. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2, and standards are well above the national average by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. The school's high expectations for all of its pupils in all areas of learning are evident, for example, in pupils' good levels of competence in using information and communication technology (ICT) and the good standard of singing.

Pupils' attitudes towards their school are, in most cases, outstanding. One Year 6 pupil commented, 'I really love it here and don't want to leave!' Pupils work hard, and mature into confident, polite and caring individuals. They relate well to one another and willingly contribute to the life of their school community and beyond.

The outcomes in terms of pupils' excellent personal development and good academic progress reflect the outstanding care, guidance and support pupils receive as well as the good teaching and learning that occur in lessons. Consequently, pupils are extremely well prepared for their next stages in education.

Most parents are very pleased with what the school provides. Many added positive comments to their inspection questionnaires. Typical of these is: 'My child has become a well-rounded young person, and Long Furlong has helped in this process.' Others commented positively on the school's promotion of a 'values-based' approach to education and welcomed their part in determining the values promoted: 'Values - a brilliant idea!' However, some parents expressed concerns. Despite the wide range of avenues of communication open to parents, about one in six who took part in the inspection survey felt that parents' views are not always considered. Inspection evidence does not support these comments.

The headteacher has successfully built upon the strengths of the school and maintained the impetus for improvement during her first year in post. She has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. One of her initiatives has been to refine the system for monitoring pupils' progress. However, teachers with subject responsibilities do not yet have enough expertise in using data about pupils' performance to inform their monitoring. The governing body is very well led by an effective chair of governors, and works closely with the headteacher to provide clear direction for the school.

The way in which the school has maintained high standards is a clear indication of its good capacity for continued improvement in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the standards in writing of higher-attaining pupils in Key Stage 1.
- Ensure that teachers become more skilled in using information about the performance of their pupils when monitoring their areas of responsibility.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Most children start in the Nursery with skills that are in line with those typically expected at this age. Attainment on entry has declined over the past few years. This is because children now start school earlier than they used to, and an increasing number have underdeveloped skills in spoken English. By the end of the Foundation Stage, standards of children's personal, social and emotional development are well above average. In many other aspects of their learning, standards are above average, but their skills in writing are below average.

Teachers in Key Stage 1 build successfully on the good platform provided in the Foundation Stage. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average overall in reading, writing and mathematics. In writing, the school successfully ensures that most pupils attain the nationally expected level, but too few pupils exceed this level. This is because pupils' skills in structuring sentences and using punctuation are not good enough. The school's initiatives designed to address this issue are beginning to have an impact, but there is room for further improvement.

At the end of Key Stage 2, standards are well above average in English, including writing, mathematics and science. Some of the ICT work completed by pupils is of a very high standard. The school successfully meets the challenging targets set for its performance. For example, in the most recent national tests, all of the pupils in the current Year 6 attained the nationally expected level in English and three-quarters exceeded this level. This represents good progress, given their starting points. Throughout the school, the small number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because their specific needs are generally identified clearly, and good quality help is provided for them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and reflects the many opportunities the school provides in lessons and in other activities to nurture it. For example, themes for assemblies promote the values agreed by the school community. Pupils are eager to play a full part in school life and support each other. School council members, for instance, play an important part in the day-to-day life of the school and are proud of the improvements that they have instigated. During a council meeting, the Year 6 pupils provided a good steer to discussions and ensured that pupils from other age groups all took part. Currently, the council is looking at ways to conserve energy and its discussions with the site supervisor resulted in pupils undertaking to monitor the school's consumption of electricity.

A small number of parents expressed concern about pupils' behaviour. These concerns were thoroughly investigated. None of the many pupils interviewed felt that behaviour is an issue. All of them said that bullying rarely occurs and felt confident that if it did, it would be dealt with effectively. During the inspection there was no evidence of inappropriate behaviour. Attendance is above average, and reflects pupils' enjoyment of their education. In this school,

every child matters, and pupils grow extremely well in their understanding of how to stay safe and healthy.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Some teaching is outstanding. Throughout the school relationships between pupils and their teachers are excellent. Pupils invariably work hard and concentrate well in lessons. Teachers plan lessons very well and generally teach them with clearly and with good pace. However, teachers sometimes spend too long on their introductions, and pupils then lose interest. On most occasions, pupils are given tasks that are pitched at the right level, so that the challenges set are achievable with effort.

Teachers keep careful records of pupils' attainment and use the collected data well to help them plan lessons. Specific targets are set for pupils to achieve in English and mathematics, and these are displayed in their books. Skilled teaching assistants provide good quality help for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy a wide range of well-planned activities. Provision for outdoor learning is good in the Nursery, and satisfactory in the Reception class. Children in the Nursery make good use of a spacious outdoor area and purpose-built facilities that enable an easy transition between indoor and outdoor learning. This is not the case for children in the Reception class, but the school makes best use of the more limited facilities available. For older pupils, the curriculum is enriched through links with schools in France and Spain. Educational visits and activities are thoroughly planned to develop skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT through other subjects such as science, geography and history. In addition, the school makes good use of the expertise of visitors, and themed days to help make learning more interesting. For example, as part of the school's support for a charity which helps schools and children in Zambia, the school organised a 'Zambia Day'. Pupils in Year 6 spoke enthusiastically about the outdoor activities that they experienced during a residential trip. However, they also commented that there are not enough opportunities for pupils, particularly boys, to take part in competitive sports. Parents agree, and inspection evidence supports their views. The school has already implemented a plan of action to help improve the writing skills of its higher-attaining pupils in Key Stage 1. The impact of actions taken so far has yet to be seen in terms of higher attainment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support offered to pupils are outstanding. Pastoral support is very good and pupils report that they feel safe and secure. All current requirements for ensuring the pupils' health, safety and protection are in place. A particularly noteworthy feature of the school's provision is its excellent promotion of a range of values, discussed and agreed by all members of the school community. For example, assembly themes focus strongly on promoting qualities such as honesty, responsibility and respect.

The quality of academic guidance given to pupils is excellent. This is based on good systems for assessing each pupil's academic performance. Pupils have targets to reach, and their progress in meeting them is regularly reviewed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good, and its impact is seen in the good progress made by pupils. During her first year in post, the headteacher has built upon existing strengths and ensured that high standards have been maintained. The chair of governors brings a wealth of relevant expertise and skill to bear in his role. The governing body works very well and thoroughly in support of the school, acting as critical friends. The school is rightly seeking to develop its management structure, and new appointments have now been made to complete the leadership team. At present, most of the monitoring is carried out by the headteacher. The school recognises that staff with leadership responsibilities for subjects, for example, have yet to acquire the range of skills needed to help them monitor the effectiveness of their areas of responsibility. For instance, they lack expertise in analysing performance data to help inform their plans for further improvement.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
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	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 behaviour of learners	2
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?	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?	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?	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	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

13 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Long Furlong Primary School, Abingdon, OX14 1XP

Thank you for helping me so much when I came to inspect your school to find out how well you are getting on. I particularly enjoyed looking at your work and talking to some of you.

I agree with your parents that you go to a good school.

There is so much I like about your school that I can't mention everything, so here is a list of what I think are the most important things.

- You do well in your work, and when you leave school at the end of Year 6 your results are better than those of many other schools. You should be very proud of this. I thought that the Year 6 prize-winning entries for the British Computer society competition were particularly good.
- Everyone in your school is friendly and welcoming. Your behaviour is good and you get on well with each other.
- You learn a lot in lessons because the teaching you are given is good.
- Your teachers are good at planning lots of interesting things for you to do.
- All of the adults in your school make sure that you are really well looked after.
- All the people who help run your school do a good job in making sure that you get a good education.

I would also like to let you know that I really enjoyed hearing Years 3 and 4 sing during the rehearsal for 'Alice'. I'm sure that the performance went well.

Even in a good school like yours there is always something that could be even better. The school has produced a plan to improve your writing in Years 1 and 2. It particularly wants those of you who are already good at writing to learn even more skills. This will involve hard work, but I'm sure that you are ready for the challenge! I would also like your teachers to learn more about how to be in charge of different subjects. One of the most important things they will need to do is to find out about how to make best use of the information that the school already has about how well you are getting on.

I am sure that you will continue to have great success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Mike Thompson Lead Inspector