

Long Ditton Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124966
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	315101
Inspection dates	15–16 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Jane Chesterfield

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Monica Marriott
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Porter
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2003
School address	Ditton Hill Road Long Ditton Surbiton KT6 5JB
Telephone number	020 8398 4398
Fax number	020 8398 6258

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Long Ditton Infant and Nursery School serves a residential community of mainly owner-occupied housing. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The numbers of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities, or who are learning English as an additional language are just above average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above the national average. About half of the children in the Reception classes do not come from the school's Nursery.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Long Ditton Infants is a good school where pupils achieve well and get a good start to their education. As one parent commented, 'this school provides a safe, caring, peaceful environment for children of various levels of ability to participate and find success in learning.' Good leadership from the headteacher, capably supported by the deputy, gives the school clear direction and a determination to build on its success. The school sets itself challenging targets and meets them well. It has made good improvement since the last inspection and has a good capacity to improve still further.

The school maintains above average standards year on year in reading, writing and mathematics, but is not complacent about how well its pupils are doing. Its well-developed tracking systems have pinpointed that lower attaining pupils have been performing less well in writing than in other areas of literacy, and the school has responded to this by introducing strategies to improve pupils' understanding of and confidence in using sounds and letters. This has already had an impact in the Foundation Stage where the children's performance in writing has now improved. More work is in hand to bring about a similar improvement in Years 1 and 2.

Teaching is almost invariably good. Lively presentation, good pace and well-chosen resources mean that pupils learn well and make good progress. They enjoy an interesting and varied curriculum with a good range of additional activities and clubs. Pupils are happy to play their part in the school and the wider community, and they take responsibility seriously. They want to come to school and most attend well, but there is a small minority whose families do not always ensure that they attend regularly. The school works closely with support services to make sure that these pupils do not miss out on their education.

Staff take good care of pupils, and as a result pupils say that they feel safe in school and know who to turn to if they have any worries. Academic guidance for pupils is good. Clear and simple targets for English and mathematics are set, and pupils can easily refer to these to know what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, or those with English as an additional language, are quickly identified and given well-targeted support. Parents are very pleased with the school and what it offers their children. 'Each pupil is valued', said one, while another recognised that, 'the staff really care about the well-being of all the pupils.'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The school's Foundation Stage is good overall, with some outstanding provision in the Nursery. Staff make the most of the accommodation and resources here to offer children an exciting, inspiring and imaginative curriculum with many opportunities for them to try out new experiences and find things out for themselves. All adults interact sensitively with children and help them develop their confidence and curiosity. There is very warm partnership with parents who are welcomed into the classroom and encouraged to be fully involved in their children's learning, for example through the 'Big Draw' initiative. There is a similarly positive picture in Reception, though the accommodation available limits the opportunities staff can make available for children.

As a result of the good overall provision, children achieve well in the Foundation Stage. When they enter the school, either in Nursery or Reception, many have skills which are above

expectations for their age, though some have skills which are significantly lower than this. They make good progress in their learning, and most move into Year 1 reaching above average standards, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. There has been good recent improvement in the standards reached by children in literacy, particularly in writing. This is thanks to the good leadership and management of the Foundation Stage, and to the close teamwork and planning amongst staff.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards of lower attaining pupils in writing in Years 1 and 2.
- Work with parents and support services to improve the attendance of a small minority of pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well in the school and reach standards which are consistently above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion who exceed national expectations is also above average. Pupils make good progress through the school. Those who enter Year 1 with above average attainment often reach standards which are well above by the time they leave. Those pupils whose attainment is below average, because they have learning difficulties or disabilities, or are learning English as an additional language, generally make good or better progress based on their starting points. The school has identified that some lower attaining pupils are not doing as well as they could in writing, and has introduced good new strategies to tackle this. These are popular with pupils and are already having an impact on their enthusiasm and confidence to have a go at writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. They behave well in the playground and around the school, and are enthusiastic, attentive and well-motivated in class. They respect and care about one another and are interested in the beliefs and values of other faiths and cultures. Pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds relate well to one another and thrive in the school community. They speak knowledgeably about the benefits of healthy lifestyles, taking exercise and making the right food choices. As one pupil said, 'Vegetables help you grow stronger.'

Attendance has improved over the last year and is now broadly satisfactory, thanks to the efforts of the school in reducing the number of term-time holidays. A small minority of pupils continue to show low levels of attendance. Pupils make an enthusiastic contribution to the life of the school and the wider community, for example through the active school council or through fundraising for a local children's hospice. They are very excited to be involved in supporting a school garden project in Malawi. Pupils' good basic skills in literacy and numeracy, and their confidence in using computers, mean that they are well prepared for the future. They are happy to work together and have good social skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good relationships and clear expectations for behaviour mean that pupils feel settled, secure and ready to learn in every class. Typically, pupils are challenged to be active and independent learners, co-operating with others and working at a good pace. Occasionally some lessons lack pace and pupils do not learn so quickly. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards and other resources to capture pupils' attention and hold their interest. Work is well matched to pupils' individual needs, so that they can learn at a rate that suits them, and teaching assistants work well to help those who require extra support. This is because assessment is closely linked to tracking so pupils' progress can be carefully monitored. Pupils' work is marked regularly, and marking is supportive and helpful to pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils and covers a wide range of subjects. Literacy and numeracy are well planned and taught, and other subjects are approached imaginatively through topic work. There is a well-structured approach to teaching personal, social and health education which ensures that pupils are aware of the importance of keeping safe, fit and healthy. The school has won a number of awards related to its curriculum, including the Healthy Schools and Arts Mark Gold Standard. The school plans to increase creativity and cross-curricular links further through the introduction of its curriculum leadership teams. Provision for information and communication technology has improved since the last inspection, and pupils confidently use class based and laptop computers to support their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care for pupils is good. Procedures for child protection and for health and safety ensure that children are kept safe and secure. Parents feel that their children are well supported in their learning, that they are well looked after and that they are safe in school. Pupils are confident that there is a trusting adult to turn to if they have a problem, and there are good links with outside agencies where necessary. The school is currently making good improvements to its lunchtime arrangements, to provide a greater range of enjoyable activities for pupils, and is working hard to improve attendance.

Academic monitoring and guidance are good. Teachers track pupils' academic progress consistently and systematically, so that they can highlight individuals who need further support and provide extra challenge for those who are doing well. The target setting process is well organised, and targets are easy for pupils and parents to understand and use. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, or who are learning English as an additional language, make good progress because they are well monitored and because there is a consistent approach to organising their support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and senior staff have established good systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school so that they have a clear picture of the school's strengths and the areas they want to improve. Pupil tracking systems, for example, have been developed well since the last inspection and are now used well to channel support where it is needed. Senior staff have a good insight into the quality of teaching and learning, and have introduced thoughtful new initiatives to improve provision in the school. The new curriculum leadership teams, for example, are designed to spread subject expertise, develop leadership experience and strengthen links across the curriculum. They have got off to a good start, though it is too soon to judge the impact on pupils' learning. Governors fulfil their duties well. They understand their role in challenging the school and holding it to account, but also recognise and value the hard work of the headteacher and her staff.

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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?	2
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?	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	3
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

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	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

1 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Long Ditton Infant and Nursery School, Surbiton, KT6 5JB

Thank you for being so helpful and friendly when we visited your school. We really enjoyed meeting you and talking to you. We agree with you and your parents that Long Ditton Infants is a good school and we know that you like going there. You are doing well in your lessons, because your teachers have got to know you well and know how to make your work interesting so you learn new things.

We were very impressed with your behaviour in school and in the playground, and we thought that you all get on very well together. The staff take good care of you, and those of you who need extra help are well supported.

Your headteacher and her staff run the school well, and know how to make it even better in future. We have agreed that they are going to help those of you who find writing hard to do as well as you possibly can. They are also going to try to make sure that none of you misses any school unless you are ill. You can help by telling your teachers if you need any help with your writing, and by telling your parents how much you enjoy school and want to be there.

Well done to you all and best wishes for the future.

Jane Chesterfield

Lead inspector