

Long Itchington CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130874
Local Authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	315639
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Alison Grainger

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	156
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicole Wicks
Headteacher	Phyllis King
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2004
School address	Stockton Road Long Itchington Southam CV47 9QP
Telephone number	01926 814819
Fax number	01926 814819

Age group	4-11
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2008
Inspection number	315639

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a little below average. The proportion eligible for free school meals is also below average. Children begin school with a wide range of individual attainment. Taking the intake as a whole, most children start the Reception Year with skills at least at the level expected for their age.

The school has been through an unsettled period in recent years. There have been many staff changes, including temporary leadership for part of the last school year. The headteacher and deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2007. Until recently, the local authority has been providing intensive support for the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It is improving steadily after an unsettled period. Parents have noticed that the school is getting better. Comments such as 'There has been a huge improvement' and, 'The school has started to feel more vibrant and fresh' are typical of how many parents see the school now. A good number of parents highlight the impact of recent changes on behaviour, which is now good, on the quality of care for their children, and on a growing partnership with them. Pupils are also pleased with the changes. One parent observed, 'My child now comes out of school telling me of new and exciting things the pupils have been taught.'

Pastoral care is strong and contributes much to pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils greatly enjoy school, as shown by the above average attendance rate. Their understanding of how to keep fit and healthy through diet and regular exercise is outstanding and they put this awareness into practice too. They feel safe at school and know a good deal about the importance of adopting safe practices. Pupils contribute much to their school and the wider community through the responsibilities they take on, for instance, by raising funds for charities. They are sensitive and caring towards others and polite to adults.

Pupils of all ages are making satisfactory progress, which has not always been the case in recent years. Across the school, standards are broadly average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory because teaching, the curriculum and academic guidance are all satisfactory. There are good features to teaching and the curriculum. In particular, the range of activities such as clubs and visits, and visitors who work with pupils, is very good. These many additional experiences, together with the links developing between subjects, add much to pupils' enjoyment of school and to their personal development. The main reason why teaching does not promote better than satisfactory progress is that it is not always closely enough matched to all pupils' needs and it does not consistently challenge the more able pupils.

While the attention to pupils' personal welfare is good, the systems for tracking and reviewing their attainment and progress are less effective. They have developed reasonably this year but the school recognises that more needs to be done. At present, data on pupils' performance are not recorded in a way that supports easy and regular checks on how well each individual is doing in the short term, such as over a term, and over longer periods of time.

The strong leadership of the headteacher, well supported by the deputy headteacher, has brought a clear educational direction and effective teamwork to the school. The governing body has done much to help the school to move forward and is contributing well to the common sense of purpose. Subject leaders are new to their roles this year and are being given appropriate support to develop their skills. However, their roles remain at an early stage of development and subject leaders are not yet driving improvements, closely monitoring the influence of provision, or being held accountable for pupils' progress. Nevertheless, the school's self-evaluation is secure and the effectiveness of leadership at all levels together shows that the school has the necessary capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Almost all children in the Reception Year are reaching the standards expected for their age and a few are doing a little better than this. The extent to which children's knowledge, skills and

understanding have developed shows that they have made satisfactory progress since joining the school. Over the school year, the effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum has been satisfactory. The temporary teachers responsible for the Reception class have made many improvements and there are now good features to both the teaching and the range of activities provided indoors and outside. Strengths are particularly evident in the wide range of stimulating activities that encourage children to develop independence and initiative and to learn through play. The school rightly recognises that systems for assessing and recording children's progress require further development. Good plans are in place to improve the accommodation, in particular to extend the outdoor provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that all teaching is closely matched to all pupils' needs and that more able pupils are challenged well enough.
- Record data on pupils' attainment and progress in a way that supports easy and regular checks on how well individuals are doing in both the short and long term.
- Ensure that subject leaders are involved fully in leading initiatives and monitoring the effectiveness of provision, and are held accountable for pupils' progress.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average overall. The secure start in the Reception Year is built on through further steady progress in Years 1 and 2. In most recent years, standards have been a little above average at the end of Year 2. Currently, they are better in reading and mathematics than in writing. The school is rightly taking action to improve the writing standards.

In recent years, standards have been a little below average at the end of Year 6 and data have shown that pupils have not been making enough progress from the start of Year 3 to the end of Year 6. Currently, pupils are making satisfactory progress throughout Years 3 to 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make steady progress and there are examples of some individuals moving on at a good rate. Across the school, however, the more able pupils are not always challenged to move on to reach the higher levels for their age.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is reflected in the consistently good behaviour of almost all pupils, the positive relationships and pupils' enthusiasm for the variety of experiences that the school provides. Pupils' willingly support and help one another. They share ideas and work together well in lessons, for example when preparing drama presentations in Year 4.

Pupils respond well to opportunities to make a positive contribution to the school and wider community. They enthusiastically contribute ideas through the school council, look after each other as 'class friends' on the playground, carry out tasks about the school, and play an active part in village activities. Pupils develop many good personal qualities to help them in the future.

Their preparation for next school and the world of work is satisfactory rather than good, however, because progress in developing key skills in literacy, numeracy and using computers is only satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Within the satisfactory overall quality of teaching, there are instances of good practice. Good teaching engages all pupils' interest well and challenges all of them at the right level so that learning moves on at a good pace. There are also good features to teaching generally across the school. Positive relationships between pupils and adults create an atmosphere supportive of learning. Instructions and explanations are usually clear. A strength is the way in which opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss in pairs so that they share ideas and develop understanding.

The main reason why the overall influence of teaching on pupils' progress is satisfactory rather than good is that it is not always closely enough matched to all pupils' needs. In particular, there are times when the more able pupils are not given the extra challenge that they need. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are usually at least satisfactorily supported. Teaching assistants are deployed well to work with individuals or small groups needing extra help but they are not always used well enough in class sessions.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

A wide range of activities additional to daily lessons broadens pupils' experiences, increases their enjoyment, and contributes well to their personal development. A residential visit for pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, provides opportunities for them to participate in outdoor and adventurous activities as well as to build personal and social skills. Provision for personal, social and health education is good.

Themed days and weeks enrich the curriculum. Developing links between subjects, such as through topics on 'mini beasts' in Year 2 and on the environment in Years 4 and 5, make learning interesting. However, the impact of the curriculum as a whole on pupils' progress is only satisfactory. The school recognises that some important areas such as the promotion of skills in using computers and other new technology require improvement. Recent developments in writing are supporting learning adequately but are yet to have full effect to accelerate progress to a good rate.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

As a result of the good attention to their personal welfare, pupils feel safe at school and able to approach an adult should they have any concerns or worries. This begins from the moment children enter the Reception Year. As one parent commented, 'Our son settled in really easily and quickly.' Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are securely in place and effective action is taken to ensure pupils' health and safety. The school provides a welcoming environment for pupils, and sensitive support is provided for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Academic guidance through marking and targets which tells pupils what to aim for is satisfactory overall. However, there is some variation in how well marking highlights the next steps pupils need to take to improve their work. While the checks made on individual pupils' attainment and progress have improved this year, the way in which data are recorded does not ensure that staff are able to easily check on how well individuals are doing in both the short and long term.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The good leadership of the headteacher has done much to ensure that the school has moved on steadily this year, since the local authority's intensive support was reduced. The headteacher has gained the confidence of parents. As one said, 'Since this headteacher has been on the scene, this school has turned around.' The deputy headteacher gives effective support and, for example, has done much to improve the identification of, and support for, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Governance is good, with governors providing a balance of support and challenge for senior leaders.

At other levels, leadership and management are less secure. The result is that the effectiveness of leadership and management overall and capacity for improvement are satisfactory rather than good. Subject leadership required improvement at the last inspection and it has not been strongly developed since. The school recognises that, while much support is being given to subject leaders to gain confidence and the skills they require, these roles need to become much more effective. Currently, subject leaders are not driving improvements in their areas and are not taking sufficient responsibility for pupils' standards and progress.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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	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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

19 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Long Itchington C of E Primary School, Southam CV47 9QP

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and finding out about your school. Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. As a result, you make steady progress with your work.

All of you that we spoke with were very polite. We saw that you behave well in lessons, around the school and at play. You work well together. It was good to see how well you share ideas with your 'talking partners' and work together in groups. You told us that you enjoy school too.

Your school does much to support your personal development. You know a lot about how to stay fit and healthy. You enjoy eating fruit and vegetables and know the importance of having a balanced diet. You have plenty of exercise. Many of you take part in sport and either walk or cycle to school. You know how to keep safe as well.

The adults in school look after you well. You and your parents told us that they are approachable and that you can turn to them if you have any worries. They also make sure that you have many interesting activities in addition to your ordinary lessons, such as clubs and visits, and visitors who share their experiences and teach you new things.

Many of your parents told us that they have noticed that the school is improving and they are right. We have asked the adults to do the following things in particular to help the school to keep getting better.

- Make sure that teaching is always at the right level for each of you and that work is hard enough for those of you who find learning easy.
- Record information on your progress in a way that helps the adults to check up easily on how you are doing.
- Help the teachers who are in charge of subjects to lead new developments to help you learn better and to check up on how well the school is helping you.

You can help by doing your best and by continuing to be pleasant young people.

Yours sincerely

Alison Grainger Lead Inspector