

Long Lane Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109853
Local Authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	325043
Inspection date	27 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Christopher Parker

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	286
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Anne-Marie Graham
Headteacher	Mr Michael Lambden
Date of previous school inspection	12 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Long Lane Tilehurst Reading RG31 6YG
Telephone number	0118 942 7187
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. They investigated how:

- effective the school is in raising standards, particularly in mathematics in Key Stage 2
- the school ensures it meets the needs of pupils, and promotes community cohesion
- leaders and managers use self-evaluation to set priorities, plan improvement and evaluate the impact of their work.

Evidence was gathered from the analysis of pupils' progress; scrutiny of samples of their work; observation of lessons; parents' questionnaires; and discussions with pupils, teachers, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject coordinators, and the chair and vice-chair of governors.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail.

Description of the school

The school is a little larger than average. The number of pupils on roll has increased over the last few years. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much lower than the average. Similarly, the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much smaller than in most schools. About half of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. A very small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.

The school has Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision in the Reception class. The school has an additional intake at the start of Year 3. Recently, there have been more children than usual joining the school at other than the normal times.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school continues to provide the pupils with a good quality of education. The clear leadership of the headteacher, the good teaching, and the interesting curriculum result in the pupils achieving well. When many extra-curricular opportunities and excellent care and support are added to this formula, it results in the outstanding personal development of the pupils.

Parents hold the school in high regard, and many appreciate the ease with which they can speak to the headteacher or his deputy, who are on the playground to greet the pupils every morning. As one commented, 'he is never too busy if parents have worries or concerns'.

Pupils are making good progress in Years 1 and 2 because they are well taught. For the last few years, the standards achieved in reading, writing and mathematics have been above average by the end of Year 2. Results of assessments at the end of Year 2 last year show that above average standards have been maintained in reading and mathematics, but that in writing they dipped to be similar to the average. Detailed analysis of each pupil's performance in writing led to an immediate redoubling of efforts to improve standards throughout the school, by increasing the range of interesting opportunities to write in a variety of subjects and contexts.

At the end of Year 6, standards in English have been well above average for a number of years. Standards were not quite as high last year. A growing number of pupils joining the school during Key Stage 2 had an impact on results in English, mathematics and science. However, the school's analysis of data clearly shows that those who attend the school from Year 3 consistently make good progress by the end of Year 6. Standards in mathematics and science have not been as high as those in English. The school took action to improve standards in science following the last inspection. Better resources and a more investigative approach brought higher standards in 2006 and 2007. While some improvement has been secured in mathematics, the headteacher and teachers were not satisfied with the results pupils were attaining. In seeking a new direction in teaching mathematics the school joined the Mathematics Enhancement Programme for primary schools. A strong collaboration has developed, and the staff have made a considerable commitment to the programme. The teachers are very enthusiastic, and their evaluations indicate benefits to the effectiveness of their teaching. Pupils, too, find it 'great fun' and demonstrate high levels of concentration. In the mathematics lessons observed during the inspection, the pace of learning was sharp and pupils were challenged and purposefully engaged by the tasks and activities set for them. In all lessons, the teachers gave prominence to the correct use of mathematical vocabulary. A comprehensive assessment strategy provides considerable detail about each pupil's progress. Recent tests and assessments show notable improvements in standards in mathematics over the last six months. There is also emerging evidence that those pupils who have previously not achieved highly in mathematics are making particularly good progress.

The comprehensive testing and assessment that takes place is thoroughly analysed to identify individuals who may be some way from achieving their potential. For example, by comparing the results of reasoning tests with assessments in mathematics the teachers are able to pinpoint where pupils are not doing as well as they should be. One such pupil received individual tailored support to overcome some difficulties and was observed during the inspection participating enthusiastically in a class lesson, and making good progress in line with other pupils. The teachers conscientiously mark the pupils' work, but approaches to identifying what pupils need

to do next to improve their work are inconsistent. In discussion, some pupils were not entirely clear about what they needed to learn next to improve their knowledge and skills.

The school has, for a number of years, invited the school community to contribute to the evaluation of its effectiveness and help to identify how it can improve this element of its work. A section of the school development plan is devoted to extending work with the community. The geography coordinator has identified where the geography curriculum can contribute to the local, national and international dimensions of community cohesion. The pupils articulate a good understanding of a range of faiths. The school has taken positive steps to build its work in this area in order to promote community cohesion through teaching, learning and the curriculum. This positive approach to community cohesion combines with excellent care and support, and results in outstanding personal development of the pupils. The pupils behave extremely well in lessons and have very positive attitudes to learning. The playground is small for the number pupils who use it, but they show considerable understanding and respect for each other. This transfers into classrooms, where pupils maintain concentration when others have to unavoidably walk through their lessons to reach other classrooms. One parent encapsulated the views of many when writing, 'The character and ethos of the school are extremely positive. My children really enjoy going to school. They have great respect for both their teachers and their friends.'

The governors have recently brought together their approach to race, gender and disability equality into a single policy. They take steps to ensure that no child is disadvantaged by, for example, ensuring there is wheelchair access where it is needed. They receive detailed analysis of the pupils' performance by gender, but have only recently put formal arrangements in place to monitor the performance of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The governors fulfil a range of roles; they support the school, act as a critical friend, and hold it to account for its performance. They visit many lessons and talk to the pupils, and have shown a particularly strong interest in the recent developments in the teaching of mathematics. Consequently, they are very well informed.

The comprehensive analysis of test and assessment data is central to the school's self-evaluation of its performance. A record is now kept of pupils' attainment in all subjects, which illustrates the good progress made since the last inspection. The headteacher, supported by his deputy and senior leaders, continues to strive to provide the pupils with better opportunities to achieve as well as possible. They comprehensively plan developments in the short-, medium- and longer-term, and set success criteria against which to evaluate the impact of their work. However, some of the benchmarks they set are not as sharp as they could be in allowing leaders and managers to collect evidence of what has worked particularly well, and, where necessary, what has not! Nevertheless, the school has achieved many recent successes that indicate it is well placed to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children enter school with the skills expected for their age. They make good progress and achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. They settle quickly, and display considerable confidence when talking to adults and learning new skills. While supporting one group of children, the teacher asked another child to record them at work using a digital camera. As a result of thoughtful conversation and careful questioning, the teacher was able to help the child to take and download digital photographs. The adults make effective use of the indoor and outdoor facilities and resources. They encourage independence and

provide an interesting range of activities, including ones led by adults and others chosen by the children themselves. When combined with the excellent care of the children, this ensures that they do particularly well in their personal development.

In the classroom, adults are very involved in making all activities purposeful, and guide learning successfully in spite of the accommodation, which makes managing a range of activities a considerable challenge. Careful deployment allows the adults to continually monitor and assess each child's progress. The children are well taught and well prepared for Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils know what they need to do improve their work, by providing greater consistency in the guidance given to pupils.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

06 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Long Lane Primary School, Reading, RG31 6YG

This letter is to tell you about the findings of the recent inspection and to thank you for taking the time to talk to me and my colleague. You go to a good school and are able to learn in a very friendly atmosphere where the adults provide excellent care and support for you. You behave very well, and play together very sensibly on the playground. You know who to talk to if anyone causes you to be unhappy, and are confident that any misbehaviour is dealt with quickly and fairly. The teachers make lessons interesting and lively. When they mark your work they often make comments on it, some of which help you to improve. At the moment, comments that help you to improve your next piece of work are not used often enough. I have asked the teachers to develop a more consistent approach to guiding you to the next step in your learning.

You are doing well in lessons because the teaching is good. You concentrate on your work and make good progress. The teachers are working to make sure that you make as much progress in mathematics as you do in English. In the mathematics lessons I saw, you were certainly being made to think hard about your answers to some challenging questions.

The school provides a good curriculum with a wide range of opportunities for you, both in and after school. Your involvement in many of these opportunities, and the excellent support the school provides, result in outstanding personal development. You have a very clear understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle, and treat each other with respect.

I enjoyed being in your school. I hope that in the future, it is even more successful in helping you to do as well as you possibly can.

Yours faithfully

Christopher Parker

Lead Inspector