

Longlevens Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115498
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	326206
Inspection date	28 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Martin Kerly

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	353
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	Stephen Heath
Headteacher	Maria Lockey
Date of previous school inspection	26 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Paygrove Lane Longlevens Gloucester GL2 0AX
Telephone number	01452 520061
Fax number	01452 520 868

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- The attainment on entry and evidence of progress made by pupils, especially any variation between boys and girls, and particularly in writing.
- Key factors leading to the school's apparent success and evidence of any outstanding features.
- The quality, range and effectiveness of academic guidance.

Evidence was gathered from observations around the school, discussions with pupils, staff and the chair of governors, and analyses of the school's working documents and the questionnaires completed by parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected in detail, but the inspectors 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 school is much larger than the average sized infant school. Numbers continue to rise and the school is oversubscribed. Children are admitted into one of the four classes in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). There are also four classes in each of Years 1 and 2 for older pupils. The very large majority of pupils are White British and almost all speak English fluently. There are fewer pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or with a statement of special educational needs than usually found in a school of this size.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has several features that are outstanding and few areas in need of improvement. The headteacher provides a clear sense of direction for the school whilst very effectively sharing leadership responsibilities with an extended leadership team. These are key elements in the school's success. The excellent care, guidance and support received by all pupils contribute to their outstanding personal development and well-being and to the good progress pupils make in their work. Parents appreciate the school's many qualities and almost all of them who replied to the inspectors' survey fully endorsed all aspects of its work. Views such as, 'My daughter is extremely happy at school', 'The opportunities our children have at the school are excellent' and 'All the staff are very approachable' are common threads in the comments received. The school has maintained its previous strengths and made good progress in addressing previously identified areas for improvement. It is well placed to continue to improve. Pupils are exceptionally positive about their time in school. They speak very enthusiastically about all the interesting activities. Their attendance rates have improved and are well above average. They have a good understanding about how to stay fit and the school has Healthy School and Activemark awards in recognition of its good work in this aspect. Pupils know about staying safe and report feeling very well cared for by all the adults in school. The school rigorously implements procedures designed to safeguard pupils and there is regular training on these issues for all staff. Pupils' moral and social development is excellent and they behave exceptionally well in lessons and throughout the day. They are supported in this by imaginative activities in the curriculum to encourage them to reflect on each other's needs and these help boost the self-esteem and confidence of all. The needs of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early. There are very comprehensive plans to support these pupils, for example, through the deployment of a learning mentor and exceptionally close liaison with parents and other professionals. A parent of one such pupil wrote, 'The help and support we have had from the school has been excellent.' Pupils in Year 2 in particular take on many responsibilities, such as being school councillors, and pupils of all ages keenly take part in activities such as making and selling clay pots or cakes to raise funds to help to protect the rain forest as well as more local charities. The school carefully considers how it can promote community cohesion near and far, a feature embodied in its mission statement, 'All of us together'. Steps taken include providing services, such as adult education sessions, working with nearby schools to offer extended school provision and establishing several international links. The attainment of children on entry to the EYFS is broadly as expected for their age. They make good progress in the EYFS, except in language development, where progress is satisfactory. This overall good progress is maintained in Key Stage 1 by pupils of all abilities. By the end of Year 2 standards are consistently above average in reading, writing and mathematics and also above national expectations for their age in the creative arts. Progress by boys in writing, although at least satisfactory and frequently good, is not as rapid as it is for girls, many of whom make exceptional progress and attain high standards by the end of Year 2. The school has moved swiftly and resolutely to address this issue. There are signs that progress by boys is now accelerating, particularly in Year 2, where they are already showing positive attitudes to writing and making good progress, but it is too soon to see the full impact of the recent initiatives taken. The school carefully tracks the progress of individual pupils and whole groups and uses this information effectively to monitor the school's performance and set end-of-year targets. Pupils currently in Year 2 are on track to attain their challenging targets and maintain above average standards. They are well equipped with skills needed for the next

stage of education and adult life. Two important aspects of the good teaching and learning are the good coordination by the effective year-group leaders and the joint planning by teachers in each year group. This enables teachers to share their expertise and experience, which is particularly important in Year 1 where there have been several staff changes. It is a factor in the way the school ensures pupils in all classes receive very similar opportunities and experiences, with work carefully matched to their specific needs. Pupils with learning difficulties and those who are gifted and talented are supported well by designated teaching assistants working with them effectively in small groups. Almost all the classrooms provide a very stimulating environment and all contain lots of prompts and displays to help the pupils' academic guidance. Teachers use very effective methods to help pupils to reflect on their work and assess how it could be improved. Pupils can talk confidently about their short-term targets and what they need to do next. Occasionally, learning slows when pupils are kept together on the carpet for too long at the start of lessons while teachers do most of the talking, but in most lessons there is a strong focus on practical, first-hand experiences and pupils are purposefully occupied throughout. The overall good curriculum contains an extensive range of activities. Many aspects of provision in Years 1 and 2 are outstanding, as is the enrichment throughout. In the EYFS the indoor curriculum is very strong but the school is aware that opportunities for children to move freely in- and out-of-doors are limited and this limits the range of experiences and slows the development of independent learning skills. The school has been awarded Artsmark Gold. The many rich and varied experiences, for example when making sculptures modelled on Edvard Munch's painting, 'The Scream', contribute to the pupils' strong cultural and spiritual development. The headteacher very effectively promotes the school's aims, with a strong focus on providing good opportunities and experiences and the inclusion of all individuals. Very effective organisational skills and a commitment to involving colleagues in taking the lead in promoting school improvement enable leaders to fulfil their roles well and this they do without exception. The comprehensive and well structured series of plans to improve the school are based on the findings from extensive checks of all parts of the school's work. These give the school a very clear and accurate picture of its performance. Almost all findings are rigorously reported with clearly identified ways for further improvement. The governors are effectively led and fulfil their responsibilities well. All policies are in place and there are secure systems for monitoring their implementation and the performance of the school.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The carefully managed induction programme helps children settle quickly into school at the start of the year. Several parents commented to inspectors about their surprise at how easily their children had settled into the large school community. Children's attainment on entry is broadly as expected, although an increasing proportion is below expectations in language and communication skills. Children make good progress and, by the end of the year, standards are a little above the national average, especially in personal, social and emotional development and mathematical development. Progress in early language and communication skills, particularly writing, is satisfactory rather than good. The school is introducing effective new methods of teaching letters and sounds this year and is providing extra help with writing for small groups of children. Children move around their classroom confidently and learn to take turns, share and play alongside one another, for example in the 'vet's surgery'. There are plans to develop the small courtyard areas further but the overall space for outdoor activities and opportunities to move independently in- and out-of-doors are limited and this significantly reduces the range of experiences. The EYFS is well led. Teachers and their assistants operate effectively as a team

and the school has a quality mark award for its work in EYFS. Careful planning is a feature of the good teaching and learning throughout the four classes. Teachers organise their rooms well and there is a good balance between independent learning and activities led by an adult. All the adults observe and assess the children's responses before planning new activities. These careful observations contribute to the good care and welfare for children throughout the day.

What the school should do to improve further

- Redouble its efforts to increase the rate of progress in writing, especially by children in the EYFS and by boys in Year 1, so that it more closely matches the good progress in other subjects.
- Implement plans to develop and extend the designated outdoor areas in the EYFS in order to increase the children's range of experiences and opportunities for independent learning.

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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 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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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 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

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	1
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**

29 January 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Longlevens Infant School, Gloucester, GL2 0AX

Thank you for the way you made us feel very welcome when we visited your school. We thoroughly enjoyed talking with some of you and visiting your classrooms. We were particularly impressed by the way all the staff take exceptionally good care of you and by the way you behave in lessons and around the school. Your school is a good school and a few things are excellent. Here are some more of the highlights we found during our visit.

- You seem to enjoy school very much indeed and are keen to come every day.
- Everyone works hard in class and you all make good progress. This is because you listen and try hard. It is also because your teachers are good at giving you very interesting things to do and they make sure your work is not too hard or too easy.
- Your teachers are very good at helping you to be clear about what you have learnt and how you can improve your work.
- You have produced lots of lovely artwork. We particularly liked the sculptures based on the painting called 'The Scream'.
- The school is exceptionally good at helping you if you have a problem or are worried about something. They work very closely with your parents and also with other experts to help sort out any problems.
- Your headteacher and all the leaders work very well together as a team. They carefully check how well the school is doing and are good at working out ways to make it even better.
- Your parents are very pleased you come to this school. Many of them wrote to us to tell us about all the good things.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to work together on two things to make the school even better.

- Help you to make faster progress with your writing, especially those boys who make slower progress.
- Carry out the plans to develop the courtyard for the children in the Reception classes and find ways of setting up more outdoor areas for them to use.

We know you will want to help and will have your own ideas about how to improve the school. Perhaps you can talk to your school councillors about this.

Yours faithfully

Martin Kerly

Lead inspector