

Longfield Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102199
Local Authority	Harrow
Inspection number	335857
Inspection dates	13–14 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Nasim Butt

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

Type of school	Middle deemed primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	8–12
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	329
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Dipak Umeria
Headteacher	Paramjit Virdee
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 19 lessons taught by 13 teachers. Meetings were held with staff, governors and groups of pupils, including members of the school council. Inspectors observed the school's work, and scrutinised the school's development plan, tracking data, pupils' work, governing body minutes and school policies. They also analysed questionnaires completed by 48 parents and carers and 102 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of school leaders and teachers in raising attainment and accelerating the progress of less able pupils and those with additional needs
- pupils' progress in science
- how well teachers and leaders use tracking and assessment systems to set personal targets for pupils in English and mathematics
- the extent to which community cohesion and pupils' cultural development are a strength of the school.

Information about the school

The school is above average in size and educates pupils from Year 4 to Year 7. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Most pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and just over half speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school will become a junior school in September 2010 and plans are well under way to amalgamate the first school on the existing site in September 2011 to create a federated primary school under the strategic leadership of an executive headteacher. The school is a member of the West Cluster Extended Schools Partnership which comprises five primary schools, a children's centre and a local secondary school. The school has Healthy School status and the Activemark award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school led effectively by a motivational leader. Good progress has been made on several fronts since the school's last inspection. For example, attainment is above average and care, guidance and support are now outstanding. As one pupil commented, 'Our teachers really look after us and make learning fun in this school.' Pupils' achievement is good and improving. Pupils start in Year 4 with attainment that is broadly average. By the end of Year 6, attainment in mathematics is above average and well above average in English, demonstrating that pupils make good progress over time. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the many who speak English as an additional language make equally good progress because of the very well targeted care and support they receive. A notable strength is the way adults plan to meet the different needs of pupils. Additionally, the consistently good behaviour of pupils contributes much to their successful learning.

Since last year, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 has improved. Many pupils have a clear understanding about what they need to do to improve their work because of effective marking and the use of targets in lessons. However, this good practice in English and mathematics is not extended into science. As a result, pupils make slower progress in science and reach standards that are broadly average. Although teachers set effective group targets in lessons, they do not often refine them into individual learning targets for pupils.

The lively curriculum is contributing strongly to pupils' good progress. During the inspection, Year 5 pupils really enjoyed designing healthy sandwiches and the packaging to preserve them. The science underpinning this design and technology activity was used well in this lesson to strengthen pupils' learning experience. The school recognises that the good curriculum can be improved further by embedding such cross-curricular links across all areas of learning.

Attendance is above average and improving. Pupils have an excellent understanding of personal safety and bask in the strongly caring atmosphere that envelops them. The school is a very friendly and cohesive community where the pupils value each other regardless of their backgrounds. However, the school has not yet extended the very good links with the local community to ensure that pupils benefit from wider international links.

Rigorous monitoring by school leaders is helping to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement. The inspection confirms the accuracy of their judgements. Leaders at all levels track pupils' progress systematically and swiftly put in place targeted interventions when underachievement is identified. As a result, gaps in

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attainment between different groups are closing fast. Self-evaluation is detailed and accurate, resulting from rigorous monitoring and a deep understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Senior leaders have accurately identified what needs to be done to move good teaching to outstanding. This, coupled with concerted action to sustain improvements demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring all teachers further sharpen and refine their use of assessment data to set, monitor and review individual pupils' learning targets
 - extending the good practice of feedback marking seen in English and mathematics to the key subject of science.
- Deepen pupils' learning experience by embedding cross-curricular links across all areas of the curriculum.
- Build on the excellent work in community cohesion at the school and local level by developing stronger global links.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Inspectors saw good learning in most of the lessons they visited. Year 4 pupils made good progress in applying their numeracy skills to solve practical problems about currency conversions. Enthused by the teacher's good questioning delivered in an amusing French accent, pupils of all abilities rose to the challenge of converting euros into pounds using different multiplication strategies. Year 7 pupils enjoyed the opportunity to apply their knowledge about particle theory to separating the colours in food dyes using chromatography. Pupils made good progress in developing their investigative skills in this engaging science lesson. Across the school, learning is developed well through good questioning and modelling. Occasionally, learning is less effective when there is slow pace and teachers spend too long introducing the lesson. The school's tracking information shows that all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the less able, are making equally good progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language were seen working well independently and in groups as a result of well-targeted provision. Well developed basic skills in literacy and numeracy and information and communication technology, coupled with very positive attitudes to learning, equip pupils well for the next stage of their education.

Pupils say that they really enjoy school and feel very safe. They have an excellent understanding of internet and road safety and most are able to assess the risks associated with various dangers. Pupils have adopted very healthy attitudes to life. They bring healthy food items for lunch, and are very active at playtimes. They spoke excitedly to inspectors about the range of opportunities they get to take on responsibility as house captains, peer mediators and playground buddies. An active school council

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gives pupils a voice and enables them to gain the wider social and life skills they will need as they get older.

Pupils have raised money for various charities and causes, including the British Heart Foundation, but their contribution to the wider community is less well developed. Pupils show respect for different cultures and beliefs and enjoy learning about them. They have a heightened awareness of right and wrong as demonstrated through their response to the high expectations set by staff and considerate behaviour towards each other. Pupils' punctuality to school is good and this, together with good attendance, makes a strong contribution to their future economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers are skilled at making learning interesting for pupils, who understand and accept their high expectations for work and behaviour. Most teachers use resources and new technology creatively to make learning more interesting. Assessment information is used effectively to match methods and tasks closely to the needs of all pupils. This ensures that the more able are challenged and that additional support is provided where

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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needed by a skilled team of teaching assistants. While group targets are used to help pupils to improve their work, target setting at an individual level is less well developed. The curriculum is enriched by themed days such as 'Fun Friday' and 'International Day' that enhance pupils' social and cultural development. Pupils partake in an impressive range of after-school clubs and activities that strongly promote healthy living. Literacy skills are developed through all subjects and this is having a good impact on pupils' improving progress. Provision for less able pupils is well established and is a strong factor in their improved attainment. The school recognises that linking the development of key skills between subjects is an area for further development.

The school has a clear understanding of the circumstances of pupils and their families. This, together with the improved use of assessment data, is particularly valuable in enabling leaders to identify the precise difficulties faced by vulnerable pupils and to carefully tailor programmes for withdrawal and other intervention groups. The support of external agencies is sought where needed. Pupils and families are offered excellent advice and guidance to help them make informed decisions about secondary school options in Years 6 and 7.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has been successful in communicating a clear vision and galvanising the school community towards raising achievement for all pupils. She and her senior team provide clear direction based around the school's aims. Their concerted effort is driving improvements in the quality of provision which, in turn is leading to improvements in pupils' progress. The governing body is well led and has a clear understanding of the school's qualities and is fully involved in planning for the future. It provides support and challenge for the school in equal measure.

The school has put in place secure arrangements for safeguarding the welfare of its pupils and for making sure that those working with them are properly vetted. Responsibilities are clear, so that the school provides a very safe environment for all. Staff and governors take their duties to promote equal opportunities seriously, and leaders successfully ensure that discrimination of any sort is not tolerated. As a result of concerted action by senior and middle managers, the gap between the attainment of White British, African and Caribbean pupils has closed. Hard-to-reach parents have been engaged well in a family nurturing programme that supports them in breaking down the

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barriers to their child's learning. Partnerships with other providers are strong and have promoted a better understanding of what constitutes outstanding teaching. Increasingly, school leaders recognise what needs to be done to create consistently good and outstanding learning experiences for pupils. The school has an excellent understanding of the local community and the context within which it works. Staff and governors are now working hard to promote community cohesion at international level.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

From the relatively small number of responses received, almost all parents are supportive of the school and are happy with their child's experience and with what it provides for them. The very small number of parental concerns related to the school taking account of suggestions and concerns, their child's progress, and the help provided for parents to support their child's learning. These aspects are covered in the report. Inspectors consider that the school has established good systems to engage with parents more effectively.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Longfields Middle School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 48 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 329 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	38	30	63	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	35	31	65	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	35	29	60	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	35	27	56	3	6	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	17	35	27	56	2	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	31	29	60	3	6	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	33	31	65	0	0	1	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	19	40	28	58	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	23	33	69	2	4	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	27	32	67	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	23	30	63	5	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	33	28	58	3	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	35	28	58	2	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



15 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Longfields Middle School, Harrow HA2 7NZ

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. I particularly want to thank the pupils who gave up part of their lunchtime to talk to us. We think your school is good and improving and has achieved a lot over the last few years.

Here are some of the good things in your school:

- Your attainment in English and mathematics is good and you make good progress in these key subjects
- The care and support the school gives you are very impressive. You and your parents know that you are very well looked after
- Your knowledge and understanding of how to keep healthy and stay safe are excellent
- You behave well and have good attitudes to learning; we were very impressed with how well you get on with each other
- You are well taught because teachers organise their lessons well and give you interesting activities to do. Those of you who find learning difficult get very good support
- Your headteacher is leading the school well and staff and governors are good at helping her to make your school even better.

Here are the main things we have asked the school to improve:

- Ensure that all your teachers use assessment even more sharply to set you individual learning targets and monitor your progress against them
- Improve marking in science so you get better guidance on how to improve your work
- Make the links between different areas of learning even stronger
- Give you more opportunities to establish links with organisations abroad.

You can help by continuing to work hard and aiming to achieve even higher standards in relation to your learning targets.

Yours sincerely

Nasim Butt

Lead inspector

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