

# Long Mead Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118575
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	339249
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 February 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Liz Kounnou

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	119
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Avril Fanner
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Joanna Powell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	Waveney Road Tonbridge Kent TN10 3JU
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Just over half of the inspection time was spent looking at pupils' learning and 13 lessons were observed, during which five teachers were seen teaching. Meetings were held with governors, teachers and pupils. No meeting with the parents was held, although they were offered the opportunity. Inspectors observed other aspects of the school's work and looked at pupils' books, work displayed around the school, school policies, assessment information and records. Inspectors read questionnaires from 46 parents and carers, 60 pupils in Key Stage 2 and 10 staff, all of which helped to inform the inspection process.

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

- the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels, in particular their use of accurate and incisive self-evaluation to drive forward improvements
- the progress of pupils who have special educational needs, and specifically how teachers make use of accurate assessments to plan precisely for these pupils to build on their prior attainment in English lessons
- the progress of lower attaining pupils in Key Stage 1, principally in writing.

## Information about the school

Long Mead is a smaller than average primary school. The number of pupils attending the school has fallen since the last inspection. A much higher than average proportion of pupils has special educational needs and/or disabilities; in some year groups, this is more than half the pupils. Pupils in this group mainly have moderate learning difficulties and/or speech and language difficulties. A few have behavioural problems. Nearly all pupils are of a White British heritage. A very small minority are learning to speak English as an additional language. The school has a Basic Skills Quality Mark. An independently run Children's Centre shares the school site. This is inspected separately.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

Leaders in this satisfactory school have securely improved pupils' attainment and progress since the previous inspection. The Basic Skills Quality Mark was awarded in recognition of improvements in literacy and numeracy skills. While attainment is significantly below average at the end of Year 6, this represents a marked improvement on previous very low levels. This has been achieved despite the challenges faced by having an increased proportion of pupils with special educational needs each year since the last inspection. By the time they leave school, most pupils are closer to expectations for their age than when they entered. The proportion reaching expected levels in both English and mathematics has increased substantially. While their progress in writing is satisfactory, this has been the slowest aspect of pupils' work to improve.

Diligent care, guidance and support provided for vulnerable pupils are key strengths. All staff work tirelessly to ensure that school is a happy and enjoyable experience for pupils. Attendance has improved considerably as a result and is close to the national average. The curriculum is packed with 'big' projects designed to capture pupils' imagination; some of these involve significant partnership with the local community, including police and press. As a result, pupils' achievement in key areas of their personal development is good. In addition to a number of other benefits, links forged with several local secondary schools have served to improve pupils' healthy lifestyles, and provide more challenge for the most able.

There are some significant strengths in teaching and assessment. Classroom environments and displays throughout the school are a delight, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and show pupils that staff value their efforts. Staff spend a lot of time gathering evidence for assessment of pupils' work and keeping clear records of achievement. However, the information gathered is not always used successfully to ensure that pupils of all abilities build on their skills in lessons and group work. Some staff share success criteria effectively with their pupils, so that they know just what to do to achieve well in their lessons, but this is not consistent across the school. Whilst curriculum planning promotes good attitudes and behaviour, it does not set out how pupils will increase their skills systematically through all the topics. Writing opportunities are often missed in topic work and Early Years Foundation Stage activities.

Capacity to improve the school further is satisfactory. Self-evaluation is realistic and shows a sound understanding of how to move the school forward. The leadership team has worked in close partnership with the local authority to introduce effective strategies to raise standards. Strategies have had most impact on attainment in reading and mathematics. School leaders are fully aware that strategies have been less successful for writing. While satisfactory, the strategic plan does not set out precisely enough what

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skills pupils need to improve to reach higher standards in writing. Consequently, leaders do not always check the impact their projects have on attainment. Not all leaders are fully involved in monitoring outcomes; currently, subject leaders tend to focus on the quality of provision rather than evaluating the impact it has on learning.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve standards in writing by:
  - increasing opportunities for writing in lessons across the curriculum
  - improving the quality of lesson planning to make better use of assessment information, and ensure that lessons are tailored precisely to help pupils of all abilities reach the next steps in learning
  - improving pupils' understanding of how they can improve their writing by sharing clear criteria to enable them to judge their own success in lessons
  - improving provision for early writing skills in Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Improve the quality of strategic planning by:
  - ensuring that objectives for improving writing attainment set out precisely how pupils will improve their skills
  - ensuring that all monitoring activities focus on the outcomes achieved as a result of actions taken
  - involving leaders and managers at all levels in monitoring outcomes.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Progress is at least satisfactory for all pupil groups. Some pupils with special educational needs make good progress because work is well pitched to help them reach their next steps in learning. This is not fully consistent so the overall progress of this group is satisfactory. The few pupils learning to speak English as an additional language make especially good progress in reading and spoken English.

The oldest pupils make good progress in mathematics. They make good use of opportunities to solve 'real-life problems' that encourage them to apply their skills. For example, they successfully used just one 5-litre container and one 3-litre container to measure exactly 4 litres. Able mathematicians often make good progress, showing this, for example, when they deal well with complex problems during a successful project in partnership with a local grammar school. For many pupils, slower progress in learning to write successfully stems from weak handwriting skills and difficulties in spelling and punctuation. An effective programme for learning phonic skills has made a significant difference in developing pupils' reading skills, especially in Key Stage 1, but has yet to have the same impact for writing.

Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons because they enjoy them and want to come to school. Very good relationships lie behind pupils' good attitudes to work. They want to please their teachers, and they praise the way teachers help them with their learning.

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Pupils are trusted to take on a number of responsibilities such as acting as house captains, school ambassadors and school council members, and make a significant contribution to the school and local community. The wide range of sports activities contributes well to their healthy lifestyles. Pupils run an Active 15 session every day where everyone takes part in 15 minutes of exercise before settling down to work. Pupils know that safety has a high priority and that staff will deal promptly with any concerns they raise and listen to their views. This is particularly important for vulnerable pupils. Pupils benefit from the good range of partnerships fostered by school leaders to develop good social skills. They are confident to interact with adults and work hand in hand with community members on specific local projects. Pupils' understanding of cultural diversity in Great Britain and around the world is not as strong as other aspects of their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Teachers make lessons enjoyable for pupils by using lots of hands-on equipment in imaginative ways, especially in mathematics lessons. This is a key strength and helps to

<sup>1</sup> 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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foster a love of learning including for pupils with learning difficulties. Teachers regularly share lesson objectives with pupils so that they know what they need to learn. Sometimes these relate more closely to the activities taking place than to the learning gains expected, especially in writing. Good strategies for involving pupils in assessing their own learning, for example by giving them lists of the characteristics of good work, are used in many lessons, but not in all. Assessment is thorough and ensures that staff know where pupils have reached in their learning. However, it mainly summarises attainment and does not make a good contribution to lesson planning by clearly identifying the next steps that each pupil needs to make. Too often lessons are planned in terms of what pupils will do rather than setting out precisely how they will reach the next steps in learning.

Rich curriculum projects are successful in motivating pupils, providing enjoyable tasks across all the subjects. Follow-up work is undertaken keenly, including a number of interesting homework tasks. However, topics are not always planned carefully enough to ensure pupils increase their skills in addition to their enjoyment. Therefore they do not provide consistently good opportunities for pupils to use and apply basic literacy and mathematics skills. An over-reliance on worksheets limits the range of opportunities for writing in Key Stage 1.

Rigorous tracking of pupils' progress enables school leaders to effectively identify pupils needing additional support. The school supports a good number of pupils in Years 5 and 6 through the national one-to-one tuition project, accelerating their progress effectively. The school has a much larger proportion of vulnerable pupils than is typical. Good support ensures they are happy, safe and ready to learn at school. Pastoral care has a high priority; a number of pupils receive specific support from a counsellor, enabling them to talk through their concerns so that they are able to settle in class. Good partnership work undertaken by school leaders makes a significant contribution to the high quality care pupils receive from other agencies and school staff.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Leadership and management are improving strongly and driving forward school improvement successfully. Leaders tackle challenges persistently so that a pattern of steady improvement is emerging. Governors know the school well because they are regularly involved, such as when they meet with the school council to hear their views.

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The aim to provide an equally good quality of education for all pupils, free from discrimination, is at the heart of the school's vision. This had led to some key strategic changes, such as setting up daily small groups for children with learning difficulties, and employing both a family liaison officer and a counsellor to support vulnerable families. Safeguarding has a high priority. Good procedures are in place to ensure that all requirements are met, and that support is available for staff, pupils and parents when required. Partnerships with outside agencies such as social services are well developed and contribute strongly to good management of all aspects related to pupils' safety. The school is heavily involved in the local community, and leaders fully understand local needs. Work to increase pupils' understanding of the wider community and differing ethnic and religious backgrounds is at a very early stage. Links are being established with schools in contrasting areas of Britain and a village in Turkey to promote community cohesion more effectively.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

**Early Years Foundation Stage**

The spacious Early Year Foundation Stage areas provide a delightful environment, both inside and outside. Cohort sizes are small so that children have a wealth of resources and space to work and play in. Walls and ceilings overflow with creative displays of children's work. Resources are chosen carefully to enhance learning; for example, the shop and the home corner were well stocked with supplies of carrots, potatoes, broccoli and cauliflower, so that children could experience the feel and smell of these vegetables as well as the taste. Planning provides imaginative activities to promote learning throughout the day. Children examining the garden area put their finds in special



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containers and independently used the computers to examine some worms digitally. Activities such as these mean that children have a lot of fun and they love coming to school. However, opportunities to help children develop their early writing skills are often missing from the activities. Because this has a considerable impact on children's overall progress, provision, while having several good features, is satisfactory overall. Children start school with levels of achievement that are very low compared to those expected for their age. By the time they leave the Reception class, attainment remains well below average. In a number of key areas, children do well. Their language for communication and thinking develops at a good rate due to the wide range of activities and the support and encouragement they receive. Children work and play well together, sharing resources and making up games to play with the exciting equipment. Leadership and management are satisfactory and there is good attention to safety through rigorous risk assessments. Home visits reassure parents and prepare children well. Planning for improvement does not show precisely how staff will tackle weaknesses in writing development.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

**Views of parents and carers**

A very large majority of parents have positive views of the school. Some parents and carers of vulnerable pupils comment on the very good support both they and their children receive. One wrote: 'This school has had an excellent effect on my son's approach to learning and self-esteem.' Parents and carers of some of the pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language also comment favourably on the progress their children have made since joining the school. A very small minority express concerns about leadership and management, behaviour, pupils' preparation for their future and communication with parents. Inspectors found that leadership and management are satisfactory and improving strongly, and that pupils' behaviour is good. The school deals well with vulnerable pupils who have specific emotional and behavioural needs. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning overall, but could make better progress in learning to write. Although communication with parents is good, there is room for some improvement in the proportion of parents who attend consultations and curriculum meetings.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Long Mead Primary 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 46 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 119 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	63	16	35	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	54	17	37	2	4	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	39	25	54	2	4	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	43	23	50	3	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	39	25	54	3	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	30	28	61	3	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	30	29	63	2	4	0	0
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)	11	24	25	54	6	13	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	41	21	46	2	4	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	37	20	43	6	13	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	35	20	43	8	17	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	18	39	20	43	5	11	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	46	18	39	4	9	1	2

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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



11 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Long Mead Primary School, Tonbridge TN10 3JU

Thank you so much for welcoming us to your school. We very much enjoyed our visit. You worked hard in the lessons we saw and behaved well. We had a good time discussing your work with you and found your comments very helpful. You told us how much your teachers help you to do your best. Yours is a satisfactory school and your teachers are helping you to make sound progress.

The things we like most about your school are:

- the exciting projects you do, that make sure you have a lot of fun
- the good work that you do as school ambassadors, school house captains, and school council members, as well as a lot of other helpful jobs in and out of school
- the way you try hard to stay healthy by taking lots of exercise
- the delightful displays of your work all around the school
- the way that staff and governors ensure that you are safe and well cared for at school.

To help the school become even better, we have asked the governors, headteacher and staff to help you improve your writing. You could help by trying really hard to reach your targets. We have also suggested that they make some changes to the school's development plan so that it is clearer about how you will achieve even higher standards in your work, especially in writing. This will make it easier for them to check that their plans are working. You could help by letting the headteacher know what helps you most to improve your work.

Thank you again for talking to us about your school and making us welcome.

Yours sincerely

Liz Kounnou

Lead Inspector

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