

Longton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119350
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339415
Inspection dates	27–28 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Carmen Markham

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Alan Whyllie
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Brown
Date of previous school inspection	3 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons and observed the nine teachers working in school. They spent 65% of their time looking at learning in lessons and in pupils' books. The inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils and spoke informally to some parents. They observed the school's work and looked at the school improvement plan, school policies and details of the progress made by pupils. Parental, pupils' and staff questionnaires were also scrutinised.

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

- whether pupils make sufficient progress in Key Stage 2, given their good progress in the Reception class and Key Stage 1
- the achievement of pupils in relation to their personal development
- to confirm the school's evaluation that the quality of teaching is good
- the accuracy of the school's evaluation of its own performance.

Information about the school

The school is average in size. It draws most of its pupils from the immediate village locality. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. Almost all are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is a little below the national average. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage at the age of four. After the Reception Year, some pupils are organised into mixed-age classes.

The school holds a number of awards, including the Healthy Schools Award, the Financial Standards Award, Basic Skills Charter Mark and an extended service award from Lancashire local authority for involving parents in their children's learning.

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

Longton Primary is a good school with some outstanding features. It has made significant progress since the previous inspection following improvement to the school's evaluation of its performance, rigorous action planning and the effective professional development of staff. There are strengths in relation to the outstanding behaviour of pupils, their excellent contribution to the school and local communities and their ability to make and promote safe choices. The quality of the school's engagement with parents and carers is exemplary; consequently, they are fully involved in their child's learning.

By the end of Year 6, standards are above average overall and achievement is good. Standards in English and science are higher than mathematics, in which girls tend to underperform in Key Stage 2. Many initiatives to raise standards and to improve the quality of teaching, linked to promoting higher expectations, have contributed significantly to pupils' accelerating progress. These initiatives include a good system to track the progress of pupils to ensure all are able to meet personal targets. Pupils' better understanding of their own performance and what they need to do to improve their work, has made an important contribution to rising standards.

The school's improvement since the previous inspection illustrates well the ambition and drive that the senior management team and governors provide. Good improvements in the school's performance have resulted from accurate self-evaluation and shrewd decision making. The senior leaders' willingness to consult with staff, pupils and parents and to actively consider their recommendations ensures that change and development are supported by the school community. This level of engagement illustrates well the good capacity that the school has to improve further.

The school takes good care of its pupils. As a consequence, pupils are very independent and responsible members of the school, local and global communities. Pupils' committees like the 'job centre' do much to promote their involvement in every aspect of the school. However, while some pupils have attended a course on community cohesion, this aspect of the school's work is underdeveloped and pupils do not fully appreciate diversity and similarities between communities.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the performance of girls in mathematics, by:
 - providing girls with tasks that reflect their interests
 - promoting an understanding that it is acceptable to make mistakes and learn from them

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- demonstrating the value of mathematics to girls' future lives
- looking at positive role models of women who use mathematics in their professional lives
- developing positive marking that highlights what all pupils, but especially girls, are achieving in mathematics.
- Improve the provision for community cohesion by:
 - developing a whole-school understanding of the concept
 - ensuring it is planned for both in the curriculum and in lessons
 - making it a focus for regular review until it becomes an integral part of school life
 - enabling pupils and staff to work more closely with communities that are different from its own.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Standards in Key Stage 1 are consistently above average. They are better in reading than in writing and mathematics. Pupils make good progress. Although girls do perform better than boys at this stage of their education, both boys and girls do better than their peers nationally. Standards in Key Stage 2 have been more variable than in Key Stage 1, but have improved recently. The scrutiny of data, lesson observations and pupils' work, demonstrate that standards are consistently above average. Pupils enter Reception with skills in line with age-related expectations. When they leave Year 6, overall standards are above average. This represents good progress. However, in mathematics, girls' performance is not as good as that of boys. Girls in Key Stage 2 have insufficient confidence in their ability in mathematics and do not always understand the importance of skills in this subject. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make consistently good progress because systems to support their learning are robust.

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They have very positive attitudes to learning and take enormous pleasure in describing how much they enjoy school. Pupils provided a very articulate account of their full involvement in the management of the school community where they are appointed by their peers to run the job centre. This centre operates from a designated office. It advertises and appoints pupils to roles throughout the school. Pupils are proud of these roles and take them very seriously. This provision enables pupils to develop their good moral and social skills and to apply their basic skills in an excellent work-related environment. Pupils' attendance is good and they are very responsible in relation to their safety and that of others. They make healthy choices and are reflective about themselves, their work and their community. The school and eco councils are very active and give pupils a strong voice. Pupils make a very strong contribution to the local community. Music is well promoted in school and underpins opportunities for pupils to sing and entertain others locally. Pupils also work hard to raise funds for local initiatives. Pupils are mature, happy, responsible young people who make a real difference to their community.

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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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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?

The quality of teaching is good. Teachers analyse assessment data effectively to ensure that they carefully plan their lessons to meet the individual needs of all pupils. They also ensure that pupils know what they will learn in each lesson and what their targets are. Pupils are involved in the evaluation of their own work and this encourages their motivation and interest in their learning. Marking informs pupils well of their successes and areas for development but it is more effective in helping pupils in English than in mathematics. Displays in classrooms inform pupils about their learning and form a constant reminder about targets. Teachers are very skilled in the teaching of phonics and this, in particular, is supporting pupils' good progress in reading in Key Stage 1. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to ensure that all pupils have access to quality learning. Although teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning, they do not make enough use of this facility. Pupils enjoy the good pace and challenge evident in most lessons.

The curricular plans make a good contribution to pupils' learning as they clearly identify the skills that will be developed as well as the content to be taught. Teachers are

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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encouraged to make the curriculum relevant for pupils and present it in a way in which all can learn. There are many opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and solve problems for example in a Year 2 lesson on electrical circuits. However, teaching and curriculum planning in mathematics are not motivating girls enough nor providing them with the necessary confidence to enable them to perform as well as boys in the subject, or as effectively as they do in English and science. Good links are made between topics. This was evident in a history lesson where time lines and number lines were compared. An enriched curriculum brings learning to life and makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils enthuse about residential opportunities, visits to Preston docks, opportunities to learn German and to be fully involved in music. There is an excellent range of after-school clubs and these are very well attended.

The school creates a welcoming environment for pupils by celebrating their ambitions and many achievements. There are rigorous systems to care for pupils and the school makes good provision for their personal development and well-being. Through the effective deployment of staff, resources and outside agencies, the school ensures that vulnerable pupils, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are well supported and guided. Effective strategies encourage regular attendance. Good transition arrangements prepare children well for their entry to school and their transition to high school. Excellent initiatives like the governors' parent forums and class on-line 'blogs' ensure parents are fully involved in their child's learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership and management team and governors are very ambitious for the success of the school and are passionately proud of the progress made in the last three years. This has been achieved by a very strong vision for the school where everyone is an active member of the school community. The resulting ownership and pride shared by all staff, governors, parents and pupils have done much to drive the school forward. During the inspection, this was illustrated by an inspiring discussion with pupils who understood fully the aims of the school and how success can be achieved. The school's success in raising standards and improving provision is a clear indication of its effectiveness. Improvements have been achieved by significant proficiency in the quality of teaching, including the use of assessment. Crucial to improvement has been the accurate evaluation of the school's performance and good action planning that has

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steered improvement. Governors have ensured that all statutory requirements are met and that good safeguarding arrangements are in place. The school is generally effective in promoting equality and tackling discrimination. It has recognised girls' underperformance in mathematics and there are plans in place to tackle this. Improvements in the identification of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have done much to ensure that these pupils achieve well. The promotion of community cohesion is not as strong as other areas of the school's work. Although the school has done much to develop links with a variety of communities, it recognises that systematic planning to develop community cohesion beyond the local area has not been a priority.

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	1
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Reception class with skills and knowledge in line with age-related expectations. Children make good progress in their learning because of good teaching. When they leave Reception, children's knowledge and abilities are above those that are nationally expected. Children's welfare is given a high priority. Good induction procedures mean that children settle quickly and feel secure. Good links with parents are established and maintained and this ensures that children's needs are met well. The children are very well behaved and they respond well to clear expectations and the appropriate use of praise from staff. However, poor access to the outdoor area and limitations in staffing on some afternoons reduce the opportunities for children to choose and direct their own activities. The provision is well led and managed. An

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accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses is achieved through regular discussions and observations. Good planning, a willingness to observe and learn from other provisions and a thorough approach to assessment procedures, ensure effective outcomes and provision.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Over a third of parents responded to the questionnaire. Overall, parents are extremely positive about the school. Comments refer to children's good progress, the good support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the welcoming environment. Parents value the quality of leadership and management and find staff approachable, supportive and professional. A typical comment reported that: 'Longton School is an excellent school where children develop well not only educationally, but socially and emotionally too. Children thrive thanks to a committed team of teachers.'

A small minority expressed concerns about favouritism, class sizes, mixed-age classes and bullying that parents felt had not been thoroughly dealt with. The inspectors could find no evidence to substantiate these views. There is a firm anti-bullying policy in place and records shows that it is adhered to. The headteacher has consulted parents about the best ways to manage class size and mixed-age classes. She has listened to comments and adjusted provision accordingly. In the opinion of the inspection team the school has managed a difficult situation fairly and effectively.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Longton 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 84 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 229 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	63	28	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	46	55	35	42	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	43	51	38	45	3	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	44	52	32	38	5	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	48	57	34	40	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	50	35	42	5	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	46	43	51	2	2	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)	36	43	40	48	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	48	39	46	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	38	44	52	5	6	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	44	37	44	6	7	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	38	45	37	44	7	8	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	52	35	42	4	5	1	1

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"> ■ 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.



29 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Longton Primary School, Preston, PR4 5YA

I would like to thank you for making my colleagues and me so welcome when we came to inspect your school. You were all very helpful and polite and displayed a lot of pride in your work. We were very impressed by the many displays which you refer to as learning walls that help you to improve your work. Some of your other displays also told us about how you help to improve your school and how you really enjoy all the opportunities that the school offers you, such as the visit to Preston Docks. We would particularly like to thank the pupils who gave up some of their time to talk to us about their work.

You attend a good school that has some outstanding features. These include your outstanding behaviour, contributions to the school and local community and your knowledge of how to stay safe. We were very impressed by the 'job centre' and the many responsibilities you all have around school. By the end of Year 6, your standards are above average and your progress is good in English, mathematics and science. The inspectors agree with your responses to the inspection questionnaire that you all feel well looked after, safe and happy in school, and that the headteacher and senior staff do a good job. Many of you said, 'I love this school'.

One of the reasons for our visit was to see how your school can improve. We have asked your school leaders to:

- help girls to enjoy mathematics more so that they can achieve as well as boys
- enable pupils and staff to work more closely with communities that are different to Longton.

You can help to improve your school by working hard to achieve your targets.

Very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Carmen Markham

Lead inspector

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