

Longcot and Fernham Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123152
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	340293
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jon Stewart
Headteacher	David Howlett
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation, which included the school's analysis of pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, the school's improvement plan and also pupils' work. In addition, the responses of 90 parents' questionnaires were analysed and their comments taken into account.

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

- the extent of pupils' progress and whether the current Year 6 pupils are on track to meet their targets
- the key improvements in teaching since the previous inspection
- how well assessments are used to support learning
- the quality of evaluation and monitoring procedures and how well teachers contribute to these processes
- how well the school contributes to community cohesion.

Information about the school

Longcot and Fernham is a small village school that serves the two villages though over half the pupils come from the surrounding area. All the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils that have special educational needs is below the national average. The school has gained very many awards and amongst them are the Artsmark Gold and Healthy Schools 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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

There has been excellent and across-the-board improvement since the previous inspection and the school is well-placed to build on its many strengths. Staff show excellent capacity for further improvement because a concerted effort by all the staff team has led to the school's current outstanding quality of education. Teaching, learning and attainment have been improved to their current excellent levels. When linked to the excellent care, guidance and support provided by staff, pupils' personal development is now also outstanding.

Parents are unanimous in saying that their children enjoy school and almost all are happy with their children's experience at school. The pupils agree. As one commented, 'I really enjoy school. The school is very healthy, safe and really kind. Everyone is happy here and all the teachers always listen to my problems and help me.' This confidence, which is confirmed by inspection findings, is an expression of the pupils' well-being and is the result of an exceptionally warm and welcoming ethos in which the pupils thrive. This is a major strength of the school and underpins pupils' excellent progress. Their behaviour is excellent; relationships throughout the school are outstanding and result in high quality teaching. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace with teachers providing exciting and challenging activities which the pupils relish. All the teachers are particularly adept at ensuring that planned work results from high quality assessments of the pupils' prior achievements and this enables all groups to make rapid progress. The needs of the most able are particularly well-catered for and most lessons carry a 'challenge' that entices these pupils to progress particularly rapidly. This close understanding of pupils' learning needs extends to the valuable additional contribution made by the team of teaching assistants. Their support for the learning and well-being of pupils with special educational needs is very effective.

Pupils' excellent personal development commences when they enter the Reception class. Many parents commented on how quickly and well their children settle. This is the result of the warm welcome given in the Reception/Year 1 class in which children's confidence and security is evident. They very proudly wish to show visitors the exciting and large outside area. Teaching is good overall in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, at present too much of the children's time is directed by the teacher. This is compounded because the layout of the classroom limits opportunities for children to make choices for themselves.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that there are more opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation

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Stage to choose activities for themselves, and re-organise the classroom in order to facilitate this.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

One parent, expressing a typical view, commented, 'My daughter adores school and loves the fun and exciting environment. She is blossoming in this caring and creative school.' Pupils rightly trust the adults and they respond very positively to the very wide and rich range of activities that are provided for them. They thrive on the many opportunities that are available for them to take responsibility and they delight in helping and sharing with younger children. This was evident in the whole-school rounders tournament in which the teams were made up of pupils from every year group and also during the daily 'wake-up and shake-up' whole-school sessions that are led by the oldest pupils on the playground. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. By the time that they leave the school, pupils are mature, reflective and responsible young people. They have a deep commitment to learning, high self-esteem and have a keenly developed sense of how to stay safe and lead a healthy life. This is reflected in the gaining of the Healthy Schools award.

All groups of pupils enjoy lessons and achieve exceptionally well. This is reflected in the very high levels of attendance. Progress in learning has improved since the previous inspection because teaching has become much sharper and high quality assessments help to accelerate progress because work is very well tailored to pupils' needs. This has resulted in standards that are high in English, mathematics and science, and current pupils are on course to maintain strong attainment, with most Year 6 pupils already working at the higher level in mathematics. They are prepared exceptionally well for their move to secondary education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1

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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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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 Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Much of the teaching is of outstanding quality. A key feature, and an improvement since the last inspection, is the very detailed planning, which is clearly focused on the needs of individuals or groups of pupils. As one parent stated, 'The teachers appreciate the needs, learning styles and pace of learning for each individual pupil and ensure that mini-groups of similar ability children are established within the classroom to allow for these differences.' Such planning comes from an accurate evaluation and analysis of pupils' progress and high quality guidance from teachers' marking, probing questions and high quality classroom discussion. Over recent years, teachers' assessments and tracking of individuals have improved significantly to their current excellence. Pupils know their targets; they have a clear idea of what is expected of them in lessons because work is marked thoroughly and teachers' comments help them to improve.

Much of the focus in the development of the curriculum since the previous inspection has been to secure a creative and topic-based approach. Subjects are successfully linked together to provide meaning for pupils and this also ensures that basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are integrated well into learning across the whole curriculum. The curriculum is enriched exceptionally well by the many visitors to the school and also the trips out as well as the good range of additional activities after school. In addition, the strong focus on developing the curriculum for gifted and talented pupils has resulted in a wide range of additional provision for these pupils. This has significantly boosted their achievement both in academic subjects and in the arts, particularly music. This is recognised by the school gaining the Artsmark Gold award. The overall quality of the curriculum is good rather than outstanding because in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the curriculum is not sufficiently balanced. Nonetheless, there is a strong emphasis on developing the global dimension in education partly through clear links with a school in Uganda; when linked to the excellent provision for the arts, particularly music, this ensures that the curriculum in Years 1 to 6 is outstanding.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1

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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 school demonstrates outstanding capacity for further improvement. There is very close teamwork amongst all the staff. Staff morale is high and all the staff share a commitment to continuous improvement. School self-evaluation is good. Regular and astute monitoring by the headteacher and the staff have led to significant improvements in provision and attainment. The school's deep commitment to ensuring that all pupils have equal access to excellent quality provision is demonstrated in the strong progress that all pupils make even though all classes have pupils from two age groups. The recent review of the school's vision, which has been led by the headteacher and a governor working together, has resulted in a good quality improvement plan. This also enables all stakeholders to contribute to the future of the school and develop a common sense of purpose. Governors contribute well and are developing an active role in monitoring the work of the school through a clear programme of visits.

All safeguarding and health and safety regulations are met in full and procedures are effective. Close liaison with other agencies such as health and education welfare supports the specific needs of individual and vulnerable pupils and their families.

There is a good sense of community cohesion. A careful analysis of the local and wider community has been undertaken by the local partnership of schools. This has resulted in a good quality action plan that has been supplemented well by school staff to reflect their own local community. Some aspects are strong, such as the many community arts projects and parenting courses and also having the community room as part of the school. These plans have started to impact positively on the quality of the school's work.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a class for Reception and Year 1 children. Currently there are 14 children in the Reception year. Very good induction procedures ensure that children settle quickly and well into class routines. This is supported by the excellent care and support provided by the staff, who pay great attention to ensuring that all are included in the activities and are made to feel safe and secure. This aids the children's rapid progress in their social development.

Children achieve well. They make good progress from their generally above average level skills when they enter the Reception Year, particularly in their literacy and numeracy skills. This is because the quality of the direct teaching is excellent. The teacher plans for these skills well. As a result, all the children reach the expected goals in these areas and many exceed them.

There is an excellent outside area that provides a wide range of activities to support and promote the children's physical development. This is complemented by some planned activities to extend learning across the curriculum. At present, too little opportunity is provided for the children to make choices for themselves and the balance between those activities that are directed by the teacher and those chosen by the children is not appropriate. However, there are too few opportunities provided for children to strengthen their independence in learning by enabling them to have sufficient access to play-based opportunities. Furthermore, there are too few planned opportunities for them to make their own choices.

There is very close teamwork amongst the staff and the teacher ensures that staff are deployed well and that the children's health and safety is paramount. There are strong links with parents whose views are valued and built upon by the staff.

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

Almost all parents responded to the questionnaires. The large majority are supportive of

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the school and parents are unanimous in saying that their children enjoy school and that the school helps their children to have a healthy lifestyle. Inspection findings fully support these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Longcot and Fernham 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 90 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 102 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	68	29	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	67	74	22	24	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	37	41	46	51	5	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	52	39	43	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	56	62	30	33	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	51	42	47	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	56	62	34	38	0	0	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)	46	51	34	38	4	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	47	52	39	43	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	44	49	39	43	4	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	41	44	49	5	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	45	50	35	39	7	8	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	56	62	32	36	2	2	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 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.



19 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Longcot and Fernham Primary School, Faringdon SN7 7SY

We enjoyed meeting with you and listening to what you had to say about your school. I particularly enjoyed watching your 'wake-up and shake-up' session and I was really pleased to see how well the older children looked after the younger ones during your rounders tournament.

Yours is an outstanding school and this letter is to tell you what we found when we visited.

- We can understand why you love school and learning because all the adults look after you exceptionally well and make sure that you are happy and safe and that you thoroughly enjoy your time at school.
- Your headteacher is doing an excellent job and together with the staff he makes sure that your school runs smoothly and well.
- You work hard, behave outstandingly well, and your teachers make sure that you make excellent progress by making lessons interesting. Teachers also make sure that there is an excellent range of things for you to do both in lessons and in the many clubs that you enjoy.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy. You told us about what you like to eat and the sports you like to play.

Even in such an outstanding school as yours, there are things which could be improved. We have asked that the children in Class 1 have more chances to choose activities for themselves rather than have so many that are led by their teacher.

I hope that you will all keep on working hard and enjoy your time at school.

Yours faithfully

Keith Sadler

Lead Inspector

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