

Long Ditton St Mary's C of E (Aided) Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125180
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	340734
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Alison Grainger

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr B Fairbank
Headteacher	Mrs C S Woods
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons. They also observed the range of activities provided as part of a creative curriculum afternoon and scrutinised pupils' recorded work. They held meetings with governors, staff with key responsibilities, pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, including an assembly and arrangements for break, lunchtimes and the end of the school day. Documentation was scrutinised, such as school policies and records of governors' meetings. Inspectors received 54 completed questionnaires from parents.

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

- How well pupils of all abilities progress to determine the match of teaching and the curriculum to pupils' needs.
- The extent to which marking and targets help pupils to take responsibility for their learning.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels in evaluating the impact of the school's provision and taking action to improve pupils' learning.

Information about the school

Most pupils are of White British heritage. About a third of pupils are from other ethnic backgrounds, including White European, mixed race and Asian British. A few are of Romany or Gypsy heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is broadly average. The percentage with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above average. An independent provider runs after-school childcare on the school's premises. This provision was not included in this inspection.

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

This school supports pupils in making satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. It prepares them adequately for the next stage of their education. While the overall quality of the provision is satisfactory, there are features of teaching and the curriculum that prevent pupils from progressing more quickly and restrict their enjoyment of everyday learning. Strengths in the provision include the wide range of visits, visitors and clubs. These are greatly appreciated by pupils and their parents. A pupil commented that, 'You get to do a lot of fun stuff during trips'. Another pupil told inspectors, 'When we learned about Henry VIII they made it fun by inviting in a man and woman to do a play'.

A few lessons are lively and engage pupils well, but often lessons are rather lacklustre. Across the school activities and instruction are pitched at a level that is generally suitable for the age and ability of the pupils. However, most teaching is not finely enough matched to pupils' differing needs to challenge them fully. This weakness stems from lesson-planning that is too generalised and does not identify clearly enough what each group of pupils is expected to learn. There are also missed opportunities for adults to respond in a sharply focused way to the needs of different groups during the various stages of lessons.

Marking has developed since the last inspection. It is satisfactory overall and there are examples of good practice. Some marking provides pupils with comments on what they have done well and on what could be improved but this is not consistent. Even when marking gives helpful and clear feedback, pupils are not always required to take action. Targets are not used consistently well enough to tell pupils what they are doing well and how they can improve their work. Many pupils said that they would like to know more about how well they are doing. As a result, even though pupils do a lot of homework, they are not able to take enough responsibility for their learning.

Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively to support learning in many subjects, such as when pupils work on programs to develop skills in using money in mathematics. Pupils have reasonable opportunities to produce short pieces of writing for different purposes. However, the provision for pupils to write at length in English and in other subjects is more limited. Pupils do not have many opportunities to use and develop their mathematical understanding and skills in other subjects. The lack of a strong focus on developing mathematical and writing skills across the curriculum is a factor preventing pupils from making better than satisfactory progress in these key areas.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good overall. This is evident in pupils'

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strong spiritual, moral and social development fostered through the school's Christian ethos and aspects of the curriculum. Pupils are pleasant and polite young people and the school is racially harmonious. It is also a calm and safe environment in which the good behaviour of the vast majority of pupils supports learning well and contributes to the safety of others. Pupils show concern for those less fortunate than themselves. They have a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy.

Leadership and management ensure that the school runs smoothly. Staff and governors evaluate provision and drive improvement adequately, for example in teaching, but not well enough to ensure that the school develops at a rapid pace. The school development plan identifies relevant priorities for improving provision. It does not, however, have clear enough criteria related to accelerating pupils' progress against which the success of initiatives can be measured. This prevents the school from being more self-critical in evaluating how it promotes pupils' progress and from aiming higher. As a result, the school's rate of progress since the last inspection has been no better than satisfactory. The success of action more recently to link subjects and provide a more stimulating curriculum, particularly through 'Wacky Wednesday' activities that are enjoyed by pupils, shows that capacity to improve is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Focus teaching more sharply on the needs of individuals and groups in order to accelerate pupils' progress and increase their enjoyment of everyday learning by: ensuring that planning is specific about what pupils of differing abilities are expected to learn and how they will know if they have been successful being more responsive to pupils' learning needs at each stage of a lesson providing pupils with more developmental feedback on what they are doing well and on how they can improve their performance.
- Improve opportunities for pupils to write at length and to use and develop their writing and mathematical skills through work in different subjects.
- Make the school's self-evaluation and action for improvement more effective by: increasing the involvement of staff and governors in evaluating the school's effectiveness and in driving improvement focusing more rigorously on examining how provision contributes to pupils' progress ensuring that the school development plan includes sharp criteria against which the success of action can be more effectively evaluated.

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

The attainment of the oldest pupils is currently broadly in line with expectations for their age, representing satisfactory achievement in relation to their starting points in Year 3. The evidence from the lessons seen and from pupils' recorded work is that all groups of pupils are making satisfactory progress. Additional support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that these pupils make steady gains in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Pupils' enjoyment of day-by-day learning

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in lessons, as observed by inspectors and reported by pupils, is satisfactory overall. Pupils enjoy the active and 'hands on' learning in topic work and activities on 'Wacky Wednesdays' more than the activities in daily literacy and numeracy lessons in which activities are generally less inspiring. Pupils' satisfactory enjoyment is reflected in the attendance rate which is average.

While pupils from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together, pupils' cultural development is not quite as strong as their good spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school and wider community through the responsibilities they undertake in school and by participating in activities in the local community. They diligently undertake tasks around the school, for example, setting up equipment. The school council members take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils' awareness of the needs of those less fortunate than themselves is developed well through links with a school in Uganda as well as through charitable work and involvement in the local community. All in all, pupils have a good awareness of how to treat others and show respect to each other and to adults.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

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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There are some real strengths in the curriculum, such as in the new topic-based approach to learning and the activities that take place on 'Wacky Wednesdays' when pupils are engaged and motivated. This is evident, for example, in the high-quality specialist drama, music and sports provision. Pupils told inspectors how much they enjoy opportunities for hands-on learning such as in art and ICT. Personal, social and health education contribute well to pupils' personal development and well-being. However, the provision for writing at length and the use of mathematical skills across the curriculum are features requiring improvement. The lack of more opportunities to use and develop these key skills in other subjects is a reason why the contribution of the curriculum to pupils' progress is not better than satisfactory.

In the most effective lessons, activities build well on each other to develop understanding and skills, such as when pupils in Years 5 and 6 interpret transport timetables and plan journeys. The teaching in good lessons is very responsive to individual and group needs, as inspectors observed when pupils in Years 3 and 4 used computers to support their work in mathematics. The teacher not only varied the activities for different groups but also gave one-to-one support that moved learning on well. However, most teaching is satisfactory rather than good. This is because the use of assessment to plan for pupils' differing needs is only adequate. Furthermore, day-by-day lessons, such as in literacy and numeracy, seldom really inspire pupils. In mathematics teachers' close adherence to a published scheme ensures coverage of the curriculum but prevents teaching from being more than satisfactorily responsive to pupils' varied needs. Pastoral care and support are satisfactory. Pupils say that they have an adult to whom they can turn should the need arise. While the vast majority of pupils behave well, the systems for promoting good behaviour are sometimes too strict. Inspectors agree with the concerns of some parents and pupils that, for example, practices such as keeping the whole class in at break times when one pupil does not behave well are unfair.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Safeguarding procedures are strong overall. The school is careful, for example, in vetting adults who come into contact with pupils and in ensuring pupils' safety in school. Inspectors investigated the arrangements for supervising pupils leaving at the end of the school day, which concern a few parents, and found the procedures they observed during the inspection to be satisfactory.

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The extent to which leaders and managers at all levels embed ambition and drive improvement is satisfactory. Key subject leaders, for example, are suitably involved in checking provision and working with colleagues to move the school forward. Arrangements for staff to plan together in upper and lower school teams are successful in implementing new initiatives, such as in curriculum innovations. However, the involvement of governors and all staff in openly and rigorously reviewing how provision contributes to pupils' progress is not well established and this limits the pace of improvement.

Target-setting is only moderately ambitious in terms of expectations of pupils' attainment, progress and attendance, with targets set that are easy to meet. The school promotes satisfactory equality of opportunity in meeting these targets. However, the targets set do not ensure that it aims highly for all its pupils. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily. The school understands its own community. It welcomes the use of its premises by different ethnic and religious groups and does not tolerate racism or other discrimination. Links with a school in Uganda successfully develop pupils' awareness of those who do not have their material advantages.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

Most parents are pleased with the school. Inspectors agree, for example, that the school is effective in promoting healthy lifestyles and that there are many aspects of school that the vast majority of pupils enjoy.

A small minority of parents have concerns. Most of the concerns raised with inspectors

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are dealt with throughout this report. Inspectors agree that the school does not involve parents fully in supporting their children's learning, in particular through systems for setting targets for individuals.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Long Ditton St Mary's C of E (Aided) Junior 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 54 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection, a few of which included separate responses for more than one child. In total, there are 171 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	60	23	40	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	38	66	15	26	5	9	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	46	29	50	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	35	32	56	5	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	20	36	36	64	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	32	32	56	7	13	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	46	28	50	3	5	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)	26	47	28	51	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	27	38	69	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	29	34	59	6	10	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	32	25	47	8	15	3	6
The school is led and managed effectively	25	45	28	50	3	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	45	30	52	2	3	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 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Long Ditton St Mary's C of E (Aided) Junior School, Thames Ditton, KT7 0AD

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. You were very welcoming. We found that you are pleasant young people who treat others with respect and are courteous and polite. You are also aware of the needs of people who are less fortunate than yourselves. Your good behaviour does much to support your learning and to help your school to be a safe place.

We found that your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. This means that the teaching and the curriculum help you to progress at a reasonable rate as you move up through the school. There are some good features to the school's work that you told us make learning interesting and fun. These include 'Wacky Wednesdays' and the many visits, visitors and clubs. You have good opportunities to be involved in music and sport. You told us that there are adults in school to whom you can turn if you are worried.

To help your school to become more effective, we have asked the adults to do these things.

- Make sure that teaching is more closely matched to your needs. Related to this, we have asked the teachers to tell you more about how well you are doing with your work and what you most need to work on next to improve it. Quite a lot of you said that you would find this helpful.
- Give you more opportunities to develop your skills in writing at length and to build your writing and mathematical skills through work in other subjects.
- Increase the involvement of all teachers and the governors in checking what works well and improving the school.

Thank you once again and best wishes for the future. Please tell your teacher if work is too hard or too easy.

Yours sincerely

Alison Grainger

Lead inspector

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