

Long Meadow School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132787
Local Authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	341340
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2009
Reporting inspector	John Horwood

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	418
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Chris Bond
Headteacher	Mrs Alison Flint
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 29 lessons, and held meetings with staff, pupils and governors. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents including policies, pupil progress records, data analysis, governors' minutes and the school development plan. The returns from staff, pupils and 84 parent questionnaires were examined.

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

- the progress pupils have made in lessons since the last inspection
- safeguarding of pupils
- the impact of measures to promote community cohesion.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups has increased rapidly in recent years and is above average. These pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds with the largest groups being of African and Pakistani origin. Around a fifth of pupils speak English as an additional language but few are at the early stage of speaking English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much lower than that found nationally. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, mainly associated with moderate learning difficulties, are lower in number than the national average. Only a very few have a statement of special educational needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of pupils in two Reception classes. Pupils benefit from breakfast and after-school clubs which are managed by a private provider. The school has been awarded the Activemark and Healthy School status.

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

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good and improving school where leaders have raised the quality of teaching and pupils have made good progress throughout the school since the last inspection. Previously progress had been satisfactory and so this current good progress is not yet fully reflected in attainment levels. Children enter the school with ability levels just below those expected for their age. They settle quickly into school routines and make good progress. Attainment at the end of Reception is at expected levels. Pupils now make good progress in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 which is reflected in rising standards. There are no significant variations in the performance of any group of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is no significant difference between attainment and progress in all key subjects, although within English there is a relative weakness in boys' creative writing. Within the curriculum the use of information and communication technology to support learning is good.

Within overall good teaching there is good use made of teachers' knowledge of pupils' abilities to ensure appropriate work is set. Pupils all make the same good progress because of well-targeted individual support in lessons. While pupils say they enjoy the lessons and they have good attitudes to learning, there can be inconsistency in the pace of lessons. The curriculum supports learning well and is enriched with many activities to enable pupils to gain a good understanding of not only their own community but of those around the world. The current timetabling of assemblies, however, does not ensure that pupils have sufficient time to get back to lessons for the scheduled start time. Pupils develop strong social skills with a good awareness of spiritual, moral and cultural issues. Behaviour is good throughout the school and there are harmonious relationships. Attendance is close to the national average.

The senior leadership team have a clear vision for the future of the school and all staff say they are proud to work in the school with such strong leadership. All levels of management are fully involved in the accurate self-evaluation and this results in them being very aware of the strengths within the school and what still needs to be done. Very strong links have been developed with a wide range of faiths and communities around the world and these have a significant impact on both opportunities for pupils and their preparation for later life. These strengths, together with the improvements in both the quality of teaching and the progress made by pupils during recent years, demonstrate a good capacity for sustained improvement. Pupils are very happy, staff work as a good team to support them and parents are very satisfied. All safeguarding requirements are met. Governance is only satisfactory because many governors are newly elected and are still developing the skills in the role.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve boys' writing through promoting creative writing based on practical activities linked to boys' interests.
- Improve teaching by:
 - ensuring a good pace of learning is maintained throughout all lessons
 - ensuring teaching time is not reduced by other activities such as assemblies over-running.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils achieve well in the classroom and say they enjoy their learning in all subjects. This was clearly seen in most classes where there was good discussion. Year 5 pupils, for example, showed great interest in the story of the Titanic which was used effectively to promote their literacy skills. All groups of pupils make good progress in lessons as a result of well-directed support from the teacher and the teaching assistants. Results from national tests over recent years show that there have been no significant variations between groups of pupils or between subjects. The school's tracking data also shows that all year groups are making good progress over time. This includes the pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 has been average over the last three years. This is confirmed by the pupils' work seen in lessons. Boys' creative writing is a relative weakness and is a focus for improvement this year. Pupils' preparation for their future well-being is good because they leave with average academic skills, they have good personal skills including a strong awareness of cultures around the world and their attendance is regular.

Pupils get on well together and say they feel safe in school and that behaviour is good. They enjoy sport and eat healthy food. They make an outstanding contribution to the school community through their many responsibilities within the classroom and by being members of the school council. They are very active in developing the school, for example through suggestions about links with parents and improving the facilities around the school. Through charity fund-raising and going into the local community they make a strong contribution to the community beyond the school. The cultural development of pupils is well developed through the wide range of ethnicity within the school population and the wide variety of links with other communities and faiths which support the curriculum. This contributes to good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

The school's evaluation of teaching is accurate. There are many good features within lessons including classroom management, very good relationships and teachers' commitment to helping all pupils learn. There is good use of progress data within the teachers' planning to provide group tasks matched to abilities. Teachers use questioning effectively to extend pupils' knowledge and focus their attention. Good support is provided for those who start school with very little knowledge of English and they soon start to make good progress. There is, however, inconsistent use of identifying clear, challenging timescales for activities and in some lessons a sharp pace is not always maintained throughout.

The curriculum is regularly revised to reflect pupils' views and needs. Learning is supported by subjects being linked through themes. The work is designed to be interesting and this was clearly evident in a Year 2 science lesson when pupils wanted to carry on with their practical work. Pupils are provided with memorable experiences such as the science/photography project. Music tuition and swimming are available to all pupils, as is a wide range of well-supported extra-curricular activities. A link has been made to a French-speaking school to support the teaching of French. The curriculum is carefully matched to the needs of all abilities and to support those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The promotion of health and safety is good within the curriculum.

Good arrangements are in place to guide and support all pupils in their personal development and their learning. All the adults in the school look after the pupils well and the concept of talking to an adult about any problems is well developed. There are also

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confidential routes through the electronic 'learning platform' for pupils to communicate with teachers and leaders about any concerns. External agencies are very well used to support pupils who need help and parents are fully involved with discussions about this support. Parents say the children settle into school quickly and pupils say they are well prepared for moving to secondary school.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

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The senior leadership team has steered the school through significant improvements in a range of priorities such as improving teaching and promoting community cohesion. Through well-developed partnerships teachers have been able to visit other schools to share best practice and there are robust systems for monitoring teaching and learning. All staff are working as an effective team and share the ambition of the senior leaders for the pupils' success. The analysis of pupil performance is comprehensive and areas of underperformance are quickly identified and support provided. This ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed. Leaders and managers work hard to eliminate any form of discrimination. This has been demonstrated by the way, when developing the outside areas to provide facilities for active games, they have provided separate areas for pupils who enjoy the more social and quiet activities. The school has a very good understanding of its own community and shows an outstanding commitment to promoting cohesion outside the school community. National and international links are well developed including many productive partnerships with other countries and other religions. Learning about the global community is demonstrated by the many links pupils have including sponsorship to support a child in South America. While the need for White British pupils to understand about other faiths is very well addressed, there is an equally good approach to helping pupils from other faiths understand about the various denominations within the Christian community. The curriculum content demonstrates this with the example of 'Godly Play' being used to promote understanding in religious education lessons, which is a strategy normally only seen in faith schools.

Health, safety and safeguarding requirements are fully met. Child protection procedures are comprehensive with secure records in place. Governors are supportive of the leadership team in all these areas, but because a large number of them had very recently reached the end of their term of office at the same time, their replacements have had very little time to acquire the skills to support the very capable experienced members still remaining.

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. The coordinator provides clear direction for staff and has built a team committed to continuous improvement. Staff are skilled in assessing children's progress and planning a good range of activities. Children enter Reception from a range of pre-school provision but parents say they settle well because of the good systems the school has to prepare them. This includes staff visiting the pre-school providers. When children join Reception they have skills slightly below age-related expectations, particularly in communication and language. They make good progress and enter Year 1 with skills close to national averages. Support for those who speak English as an additional language is good and they leave reception with skills similar to their peers. Vulnerable groups are quickly identified and extra support put in place.

Children experience a range of well-planned activities across all the expected areas of learning. Classrooms are spacious and well resourced and the attractive outside areas are used well to provide additional space for children to choose their own resources and work independently. Children enjoyed working collaboratively when playing with the train track as well as reading quietly in the book corner. The creative curriculum, with a strong focus on role play, makes learning enjoyable and also contributes well to their learning. Links with parents and carers are well established and all welfare requirements are secure.

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

Parents are very pleased with the school. Typical comments referred to how they felt that teachers and staff make a real effort to provide a caring and supportive environment. They are also pleased with the firm level of discipline and there were several positive comments about provision and teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage. There were a very few individual areas of concern but no consistent worries.

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These were looked at during the inspection, but the concerns had already been addressed by the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Long Meadow 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 418 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	73	21	25	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	57	68	27	32	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	44	52	38	45	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	49	40	48	3	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	43	51	40	48	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	51	61	30	36	2	2	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	56	33	39	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)	40	48	33	39	3	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	57	30	36	5	6	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	46	41	49	3	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	38	44	52	5	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	45	54	31	37	3	4	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	56	67	25	30	2	2	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.



4 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Long Meadow School, Milton Keynes, MK5 7XX

We really enjoyed visiting your school and seeing you learning and playing together. Yours is a good and improving school which is giving you a good education. There are many good things about your school and these are a few of them:

- you are all making good progress in your work.
- you behave well and enjoy school
- you get on well with your teachers and with each other
- you have a good understanding of how to keep safe, fit and healthy
- all the staff look after you and care for you well
- you have many opportunities to learn about people from other parts of the world as well as the faiths and beliefs of the local communities.

There are a few things we have asked the school to do to make it better. They are:

- to help boys improve their creative writing by increasing the opportunities they have to write about things they enjoy doing
- to ensure that the pace of all lessons is good throughout
- to review the timetable so that the start of lessons is not delayed because of the time it takes you to get from other activities such as assemblies.

You can help by carrying on working hard and helping your teachers.

Yours sincerely,

John Horwood

Lead inspector

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