

Latchmere School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102571
Local Authority	Kingston Upon Thames
Inspection number	342345
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Brian Evans

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	682
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Debbie Coombs
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Ritchie
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2007
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Latchmere Road Kingston Upon Thames KT2 5TT
Telephone number	020 8546 7181
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Latchmere is a much larger than average school serving a diverse community. It was formed from an amalgamation between the Infant and Junior Schools in September 2007. There is provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are small numbers of children from Ministry of Defence families who may arrive and leave at other than the usual times. About a third of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds - this is above the national average. The proportion of children with English as an additional language is also above average. The school has gained several national awards, including Healthy School status and Investors in People. The school has a specialist-resourced provision for high-functioning Autistic Spectrum Disorder pupils. The school provides 'wrap-around care' which includes a breakfast club, an after school club and a holiday club.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Latchmere is an outstanding school. Standards are well above average and all groups of pupils make excellent progress. The very positive learning environment is a result of the outstanding levels of care, guidance and support shown by all adults for the personal development and well-being of each pupil. Behaviour is exemplary and attendance is well above average. At the last inspection, the junior and infant schools were both deemed outstanding. Since September 2007 their amalgamation into one primary school has been, as described by one parent, 'seamless'. Teachers plan learning carefully to meet individuals' needs, and teaching and learning are outstanding. All groups of pupils are confident, articulate and eager learners who are clear as to what they have to do to improve their work further. The continuing and successful striving for excellence is due to the outstanding leadership of the headteacher who is supported strongly by her senior team, her staff and the governing body. Nearly all parents highlighted the happy ethos and challenging educational environment of the school. One parent wrote, 'My three children love Latchmere School - all have enjoyed every minute of it - they have achieved to the best of their academic ability and are well-rounded individuals - they are prepared brilliantly for the challenge of secondary school and life in general.'

The school consistently exceeds its challenging targets. Well above average achievement across all curriculum areas is possible because teachers enable all pupils to apply their basic skills in a wide range of activities both in and out of the classroom. Pupils are attentive listeners and develop articulate and confident speaking skills. Teachers assess pupils' progress at frequent intervals and quickly address underachievement. Learning support assistants work in close partnership with teachers to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities successfully. Parents are rightly very impressed with the provision for Autistic Spectrum Disorder pupils as well as for those with other specific learning difficulties. Teachers and pupils use the interactive electronic whiteboards confidently and effectively as a motivating learning tool. Pupils believe that learning is fun.

The school is reviewing its curriculum and recognises that greater creativity is an important key to sustaining the present very high levels of achievement. The broad and balanced curriculum makes superb use of the space around the school by including imaginative play areas, nature areas and a swimming pool. Residential visits in Years 4, 5 and 6 and high standards of art, music, sport and other clubs are an integral part of school life. Participation rates are very high with over eight out of every ten pupils attending one or more of these activities. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils appreciate the quiet, calm and restful environment of the 'Blue Room' which is solely available for their reflection and meditation. The impact of an excellent approach to community cohesion is seen in the acceptance of diversity by pupils and in parents' feedback on the positive role of the school within its community. Excellent school procedures to counter bullying or name-calling are followed closely. School council members carry out their roles in a mature and responsible way. All of the above indicate that the school has an outstanding capacity to sustain its current success.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children enter the Nursery with skills and understanding that are average overall with some requiring additional support because of their medical and other needs. They make excellent progress in all areas of learning during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage because

of outstanding teaching and the very effective deployment and commitment of support staff. The settling-in procedures are excellent. Staff work hard to ensure parents are informed and fully involved in their child's development. Parents are very happy with the provision and one commented, 'My child has serious learning difficulties but has really thrived with the care and support he has received.'

Adults work together as an effective close-knit team. Attention given to the welfare of children is excellent and they play and learn in a clean, safe and secure environment. A current project on 'The Island' in partnership with a neighbouring primary school gives full rein to children's creative enthusiasm and stimulates a wide range of purposeful play. Speaking and listening skills develop quickly. For example, they happily learn to use the words 'up', 'down', 'across', 'under' and 'through' when they go on the bear hunt on their large climbing frames. There is an excellent balance between activities led by the staff and those that encourage children to explore the world around them. Children develop confidence and build strong positive relationships with adults and other children. Progress is tracked rigorously and assessment data confirm the excellent progress for almost all children. Leadership and management of the provision are outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend and build on the current curriculum to provide more opportunities for creativity.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards throughout the school are significantly above expectations. Standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of both key stages are consistently well above average from year to year and represent excellent achievement from pupils' average starting points. A very high level of progress for pupils of all abilities, including those with English as an additional language, is maintained because of the wide and effective range of support programmes to meet individual needs. This is further underpinned by outstanding teaching and pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Pupils are very aware of their own challenging targets and ways in which they can achieve them. Those pupils with specific learning difficulties and those with Autistic Spectrum Disorder benefit from skilful, early support and interventions from teachers and well-trained support staff who meet their learning needs well and so enable them to make excellent progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy school and their positive attitudes and enthusiasm for learning are evident in lessons, in extra-curricular activities and around the school. They are confident with adults and their peers and these excellent relationships create a happy working environment. For example, the current western musical drama performances involve all Year 6 pupils and provide an excellent illustration of the school's success in giving everybody an opportunity to play roles which require great self-discipline and teamwork. Pupils are given many opportunities to make significant contributions to the school. As one pupil stated, 'If you didn't have rules, life would be chaotic'. This is a highly cohesive school sharing common values of equal opportunity, mutual respect and caring for each other. Pupils have a very wide in-depth knowledge of other cultures and races. Currently, the language of the month on display around the school is Arabic. Opportunities such as 'Money Talks' days give them responsibility for handling a budget. In

'The Island' project, they learn about trade by selling services such as hair and nail care, and bracelets and pirates' hats that they have made. Pupils' knowledge about healthy lifestyles and the importance of regular exercise and healthy diet provides the basis for the school's Healthy School status. The excellent physical education curriculum and swimming lessons reinforce their skills and knowledge. Pupils learn about the environment first-hand through use of the outdoor classroom and nature reserve. The breakfast and after-school clubs contribute significantly to the personal and social development of pupils.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are systematically and very carefully monitored and the school accurately judges the quality of both to be excellent overall. For example, much of the learning observed in Year 6 was exceptional and characterised by an infectious and enthusiastic learning 'buzz' generated by pupils, learning support assistants and teachers. As a result, the progress of a number of pupils has been 'awesome'. In the best practice, teachers plan an emphasis on developing pupils' thinking skills and this is clearly having a very positive impact on learning in the classroom. Pupils are very good independent learners and work collaboratively so that they make outstanding gains in learning. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and manage pupils and resources exceptionally well. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology in whole-class teaching and for individual work in the suite.

Assessment through questioning is very good and teachers use pupils' ideas well to take learning forward. Work is marked regularly and thoroughly. Pupils, including the gifted and talented, are given frequent opportunities to work in pairs and groups and they confidently evaluate their own and others' work. Pupils make a very valuable contribution to the success of lessons. Classrooms and corridors have excellent displays and these contribute well to learning. Creative work is of a high quality and the school has an excellent focus on the celebration of pupils' achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The pastoral and academic curriculum from Nursery through to Year 6 gives teachers excellent opportunities to make pupils' learning creative and enjoyable. The school has set itself the task of setting up an even more challenging and exciting primary curriculum over the next year. Curriculum celebration days, focused on areas such as mathematics, drama and healthy eating, enrich pupils' learning experiences. There is outstanding provision for the development of basic skills in literacy and numeracy with a range of effective interventions in place to support those who find learning more difficult. The curriculum is further enriched through a very wide range of clubs which contribute to pupils' personal development and add to their knowledge and skills. An excellent range of visits and visitors, including the residential visits for Years 4, 5 and 6, bring the curriculum to life and significantly extend pupils' learning experiences. Recently a small group of Year 5 pupils took part in a primary science and technology challenge competition and won the first prize of £100 for the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

High standards of care are seen in all aspects of school. All activities are carefully assessed for risks and are accompanied by staff qualified in first aid. Pupils feel very safe and safeguarding procedures are rigorous. Attendance is monitored very closely and action is taken very quickly when pupils are absent without good reason. The needs of the most vulnerable groups of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language are met in an exemplary way. They make excellent progress in line with all other pupils. The recent addition of the Topaz Room is an excellent learning facility for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Tracking systems and assessment procedures are very thorough. Pupils receive regular responses to their work with written or oral guidance on how to improve their work further. Parents receive regular newsletters and are well informed. Older pupils state that they are strongly supported by teachers to cope with 'the emotional impact of the transition to secondary school'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school which she communicates expertly to governors, staff, parents, pupils and to the local community. Parents overwhelmingly support the school and its ethos. There is a strong emphasis on partnership that emphasises very clear priorities which are focused on maintaining and improving high standards and provision. Rigorous monitoring and self-evaluation are linked closely to challenging and realistic targets. The governing body plays a strong role in fulfilling its statutory responsibilities with evidence of rigorous challenge and excellent support as, for example, over the amalgamation of the junior and infant schools. At first sight, the school development plan looks complex but priorities are clear and action, monitoring and expected outcomes are well focused. Financial implications are very clear. Deputies and senior leaders show considerable expertise through the 'best practice manager' approach in monitoring, evaluating and supporting development in learning. The provision for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and learning difficulties is very well organised and led. Senior managers acknowledge that there is no room for complacency and are seeking to make their new primary curriculum even more effective in support of pupils achieving their full potential. There is excellent provision for community cohesion at both local and global levels. Pupils have a real understanding of the world they live in. Financial and administrative staff are very efficient. Overall all staff feel involved in the policies of the school and take pride in their contribution to its success.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

17 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Latchmere School, Kingston Upon Thames, KT2 5TT

I am writing to let you know how much we enjoyed our visit to your school. You will be pleased to hear that we think that Latchmere School is an outstanding school that achieves very high standards. Here are a number of things we like about your school.

- You are making excellent progress in your work.
- You are keen to come to school and really enjoy learning. A very high proportion of you take part in so many different activities during lunchtime and after school. You gave us a great many examples of your contributions to music, sport and drama and also of your awards in other competitions including the recent success of a number of Year 5 pupils in the local Primary Science and Technology Challenge.
- You help one another to be happy at school. School councillors take on responsibilities very well and in a mature manner.
- We were very impressed with the way that you, the headteacher, teachers, teaching assistants, governors and administrative staff all work closely together as a team. The Year 6 western musical drama dress rehearsal that we saw was a superb illustration of this very high level of teamwork.
- We agree with you that the opportunity for meditation, calm and rest in the Blue Room is an excellent facility.

We have asked your teachers to raise standards even further by exploring changes to the school curriculum to provide more opportunities for creativity. We are sure that you will eagerly contribute many of your own ideas to help your teachers work through this process.

We wish you the very best of luck for the future.

Yours faithfully

Brian Evans

Lead Inspector