



Longfields Primary and Nursery School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 123008
Local Authority Oxfordshire
Inspection number 292556
Inspection dates 11–12 September 2006
Reporting inspector Charalambos Loizou

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Longfields
School category	Community		Bicester
Age range of pupils	3–11		OX26 6QL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01869 252386
Number on roll (school)	254	Fax number	01869 324814
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Kim Broadhead
		Headteacher	Mr Graham Hollows
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2003		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	11–12 September 2006	292556

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size primary school. The nursery provides part-time education for three-year-old children who are taught alongside reception aged children. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small number are learning English as an additional language but none are in the early stages. The school serves an area of Bicester that has some social and economic disadvantage. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is below that of most schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The headteacher has been in post for two years. The school is part of a local learning network of schools that provides training for staff.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education and standards are improving. Although English, mathematics and science standards are below average, achievement is satisfactory. The pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points. Over the last few years standards were slipping and attendance rates falling. Under the clear leadership of the headteacher, the school has taken effective measures to reverse this trend. Standards and attendance are improving well and the budget is now balanced. Parents are pleased with these improvements. The leadership team shows satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Reading, mathematics and science standards are below average but writing standards are low. National tests results show that too few pupils achieve higher levels in writing because there are weaknesses in the teaching.

Children in the Foundation Stage do well and make good progress because the teaching is consistently good. In the rest of the school, the teaching is satisfactory with some good lessons. Pupils apply themselves well in most lessons, particularly when the teaching is fast paced and challenging. The most effective teaching, particularly in Years 5 and 6, accelerates pupils' progress, including the progress they make with writing. Some teaching, although satisfactory, does not always provide tasks that are well matched to the abilities of all pupils. Assessment and target setting are unsatisfactory and are not being used well enough to track pupils' progress to ensure they reach their targets, particularly in writing. The tracking of pupils identified with learning difficulties and disabilities is unsatisfactory because of weaknesses in how this is managed.

The pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in good attendance rates. Behaviour is satisfactory. The vast majority of pupils are well behaved at break times and in lessons but there are inconsistencies. In lessons where the teaching is not maintaining good pace and challenge some pupils become restless so their progress slows. In good lessons, the expectations set are clear and all pupils are attentive. Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. They understand why they should eat healthily and develop active lifestyles. Pupils are well cared for but academic guidance and support are unsatisfactory. A satisfactory curriculum is provided with a good emphasis placed on how pupils can develop into mature and responsible individuals. Consequently, pupils learn to cooperate with others and develop good attitudes to learning and school.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has made an accurate evaluation of its own effectiveness. The staff provide good care but recognise that they could improve the guidance they offer pupils that will help them reach their learning targets. The large majority of parents hold positive views of the school. Family learning programmes are helping parents to be more involved in their children's learning, as one commented, 'Longfields has given me opportunities to develop parenting skills and do activities at home'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching so tasks in lessons are better matched to the abilities of all pupils to raise standards, particularly in writing.
- Improve the management of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.
- Improve assessment and target setting to ensure that pupils' progress is being checked regularly.
- Set higher expectations for pupils' behaviour in all lessons to ensure that it is consistently good throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are below average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their below average starting points. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well because the teaching is good. In the rest of the school achievement is mainly satisfactory and is good in Years 5 and 6.

Most pupils start school with well below average attainment in language, communication and mathematics. National test results in 2005 show that the pupils in both Year 2 and Year 6 achieved below average standards. Standards improved in 2006, edging closer towards those expected nationally in reading, mathematics and science, but are still below average overall. Writing standards are low because too few pupils achieve the higher levels. This reflects weaknesses in the teaching of writing and in assessment. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make satisfactory progress but some could do better because their targets are not challenging enough.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils feel happy and safe. They are clear that help is available if they have problems or feel sad. Relationships are good and standards of behaviour are satisfactory, although the pupils' knowledge of other cultures is limited. Where teachers set higher expectations for behaviour, pupils are attentive, well behaved and sustain their concentration for longer periods. In some lessons, expectations are not as high so behaviour is only satisfactory. Pupils enjoy coming to school and show good attitudes. They speak eagerly about their work, and one commented, 'This school is brilliant, you get taught what you didn't know before'. Attendance is good and pupils are punctual. Pupils are proud of their school and explain that bullying is rare and well dealt with. They reflect thoughtfully about happenings in the wider world and consider those less fortunate than themselves. They know the importance of making healthy eating choices but this is not always reflected in some of their lunchboxes and eating choices at break times. The school is helping pupils to develop good eating habits by providing fruit for younger pupils. They have a good understanding of the importance of exercise, such

as cycling to school. The school council takes its responsibilities conscientiously and pupils feel they are improving the school because they are valued and their views and ideas are taken seriously.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The teaching is mainly satisfactory and is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6. The teaching enables pupils to make satisfactory progress. Except for the Foundation Stage, there are inconsistencies in the pace of lessons and assessment is not being used to ensure that all pupils reach their targets, particularly in writing. The teaching of writing from Year 1 onwards is a relative weakness because pupils are not given enough opportunities to write at length independently. In the Foundation Stage and Years 5 and 6, lessons are more stimulating and challenging, and tasks are well matched to the abilities and needs of the pupils. Typically, teachers maintain satisfactory behaviour and in the best lessons behaviour is good because pupils are fully engaged and attentive to their tasks. This was evident in a good Year 6 English lesson because pupils enjoyed the challenging task of investigating words and metaphors to construct poems.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school's curriculum is satisfactory with some good features that have a positive effect on the pupils' personal and social development. Activities are planned to help pupils develop a healthy and safe lifestyle. There is a stimulating range of learning opportunities in its enrichment afternoons. These are well supported by the talents of staff, parents and members of the community. A good range of visits also enhances and enriches the curriculum. Information and communication technology (ICT) is increasingly used to support learning in other areas of the curriculum. A challenging range of learning opportunities is provided for the children in the Foundation Stage supporting their good progress. Overall, the needs of pupils are met satisfactorily. Improvements to the planning in mathematics for teaching methods of calculations have led to a rise in standards. However, planning of the work for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities does not always build carefully on their previous learning. Standards of independent writing for more able pupils are not high enough because there are insufficient opportunities planned for pupils to write independently and at length until they reach Year 5 and 6.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils are well cared for. There are good links with other agencies, for example, behaviour and family link workers. Systems for

tracking the progress of pupils are inconsistent so that attainment targets for some pupils are not high enough. Pupils with special educational needs do not always meet their targets, reflecting weaknesses in assessment and tracking. Their progress is not being monitored closely enough to ensure that individual learning targets are challenging enough. The school is aware of this and has begun a whole scale review of provision for these pupils with its local authority. Good health and safety procedures and regular risk assessments ensure that the school is safe and secure. This is an area of significant improvement since the school's last inspection. There are robust child protection procedures in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has developed a sense of shared responsibility and teamwork among the staff. Changes to the management roles have improved standards and teaching which are key priorities in the school's development plan. The headteacher has been instrumental in improving mathematics standards by identifying areas for improvement following the monitoring of lessons. Governors are supportive and involved in the work of the school but their monitoring has not been regular or robust enough to hold the school to account. Good use is made of training with the local network of partnership schools. This is linked to the school's priorities following accurate evaluations of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Monitoring has identified weaknesses in assessment, target setting and the management of special educational needs. Evaluations of the quality of teaching have led to the identification of areas for improvement. Senior staff have modelled good lessons and focused on groups of pupils identified as falling behind which has had a positive effect on reading and mathematics standards but have yet to show the same pace of improvement in writing. Staff and governors survey parents' and pupils' views to inform the priorities in the development plan as well as improving the personal development and welfare of the pupils. The large majority of parents think well of the school because they feel they are increasingly playing a part in the education of their children in partnership with the school.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I was pleased to visit your school together with two other inspectors. I write to thank you for your help and for making us feel welcome.

We believe that yours is a satisfactory school.

We think these are the best things about your school:

- it helps you to enjoy learning and try hard
- you come to school regularly and on time
- you are making progress in your reading, mathematics and science
- the children in the Foundation Stage do well because their lessons are interesting and exciting
- you enjoy your special enrichment afternoons when you work with local people, parents and staff.

We have asked your teachers to do the following to improve your school to:

- find ways to help you do better in your writing
- keep a closer check on those of you who need extra support to reach your targets
- check how well you are doing by looking at your test results to see if you will reach your targets
- make sure that behaviour is good all the time.

I wish you all the very best.

Yours faithfully

Charalambos LoizouLead Inspector