

Long Buckby Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121843
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	359095
Inspection dates	9–10 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Christopher Parker

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	161
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Bray
Headteacher	Tony Cox
Date of previous school inspection	17 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The majority of the inspectors' time was spent in lessons, observing learning. Eighteen lessons, taught by seven teachers, were observed. Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, subject leaders and the Chair of the Governing Body. The inspectors looked at a range of documentation and a sample of the pupils' work. Questionnaire responses from pupils, staff and 50 parents were analysed.

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

- How well does the teaching meet the needs of pupils of differing abilities, particularly the more able?
- To what extent are subject leaders identifying weaknesses and taking action to overcome them?
- How effective is the school's approach to planning and evaluating community cohesion?

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average junior school. The pupils are taught in five mixed-age classes. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. About a fifth of the pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities; this includes those with statements of special educational needs and is similar to most schools. The very large majority of pupils are from a White British background.

A new headteacher took up the post in January 2010.

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

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The headteacher, staff and governing body are all keen to improve the school's effectiveness. They have been successful in making a number of positive changes which have resulted in better progress for pupils over the last year. However, their plans do not have a sufficiently sharp focus on improving teaching and learning to bring further, rapid improvement. Consequently, achievement remains satisfactory, and attainment in English and mathematics broadly average, because too few pupils reach the higher levels of attainment. While some of the teaching is good, much is satisfactory. In some lessons pupils learn at a good pace, but in others tasks are not matched well enough to the needs of pupils of differing abilities to make sure that they make consistently good progress. The momentum of some lessons ebbs and flows because high expectations of what the pupils can achieve, particularly the more-able ones, are not consistently maintained. Not enough is expected of the presentation of pupils' work, and the teachers' marking, although conscientious, does not provide pupils with clear guidance about how to improve their work.

The large majority of pupils enjoy school and say they feel safe; their parents agree. The pupils are confident that any concerns they may have will be dealt with swiftly by the adults in school. The school's arrangements for keeping the pupils as safe as possible meet requirements well and are frequently checked by the governing body. Most pupils behave appropriately so that lessons are not interrupted, although occasionally a few do not settle as quickly as they might to the tasks they are set. Attendance levels are above average.

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that interests and engages the pupils. It has recently been reorganised around a range of topics and themes to increase coherence, and now provides more opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and their information and communication technology skills in a range of contexts. The pupils value the clubs and extra-curricular activities they attend. These range from knitting to basketball, and recorders to 'Rockschool'. Many of these activities are made possible through the effective partnerships the school has with individuals and organisations.

The headteacher and subject leaders have a clear programme for checking that improvement activities are having the expected impact. They are tracking each pupil's progress, but targets for the more able are not challenging enough. Subject leaders are now playing an increased role in the improvement strategy, but currently their work is not focused sharply enough on improving how well the pupils are learning and making progress in lessons. The self-evaluation of the school's performance is accurate and reflects the headteacher's and the governing body's clear evaluation and knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sharply focus the school improvement strategy on improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Take steps to promote consistently good progress for pupils by:
 - ensuring that lesson plans take full account of what pupils already know, and that they set out clearly what pupils of differing abilities will learn next
 - raising expectations in the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation and what can be achieved by the more-able
 - improving marking so that pupils know what to do to take their learning to the next stage.
- Raise attainment in English and mathematics so that nine out of 10 pupils reach the expected level, and at least half reach the higher level, at the end of Year 6 in 2012, by setting challenging targets for pupils, particularly for more-able.
- Ensure that subject leaders play a full role in the school improvement strategy by rigorously monitoring, evaluating and improving the quality of teaching and learning in the subjects they lead.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils make satisfactory progress. In some lessons, the pupils make good progress because tasks are well-focused, interesting and motivating; in others, however, tasks are not based securely enough on what they already know. For example, in a lesson in which the pupils extended their vocabulary and use of interesting words to grab the reader's attention, the teacher had carefully modified the tasks for the more and less able in the class, so that all groups did well. However, in another lesson the more-able pupils were not challenged sufficiently, and consequently they made satisfactory rather than good progress. This inconsistency is because changes in assessment, target setting and planning, although bringing benefits, have not been moulded into a coherent approach which underpins teaching and learning throughout the school.

Improvements in tracking have provided a sharper focus on the progress of the less-able, identifying and supporting those who are underachieving, and ensuring that those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive additional and effective support, both in lessons and in small groups, so that they now make satisfactory progress.

The school's own assessments for the end of Year 6 in 2010 show more pupils reached the expected level in English and mathematics, and there was a modest increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level in mathematics.

The pupils have a secure understanding of staying healthy, and in conversation are able to talk confidently about the healthy choices they make as a result of what they have learned at school. Involvement in a project run by Northampton Saints Rugby Club has resulted in pupils having a very clear understanding of the dangers of smoking. The pupils play a satisfactory and increasing role in the school community through the school and Eco

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Council. The pupils' social and moral development is good, and this is illustrated well by the broad range of charities they support. However, they have a limited understanding of multicultural society beyond the key facts about the major world faiths.

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	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory. A positive feature of some lessons is the good questioning by the teacher, particularly when promoting discussion - for example, about whether computer games are a good or bad thing. However, in other lessons questioning is not as effective. The teachers routinely ask the pupils to evaluate their own understanding and performance, but the pupils' responses are not used well enough to determine whether further explanations or greater challenge are needed. Many of the inconsistencies in lessons emanate from planning that does not take sufficient account of what pupils already know and are able to do. Too many lesson plans focus on the task, rather than on what the pupils of differing abilities need to learn next.

The quality of marking also varies. Consequently, some pupils are not getting the guidance that they need to improve their work rapidly. In addition, expectations of pupils' presentation and handwriting are not high enough. Pupils have target books which set out very clearly the next steps in learning in both English and mathematics, but these are not routinely referred to when their work is marked, or planned. As a result, the link between assessment, target setting and planning, although improving, is not as effective as it

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should be, and some lesson plans lack clarity about exactly how the more-able pupils will be challenged.

The curriculum has been redesigned to ensure that there are frequent opportunities for pupils to make progress in all subjects. Teachers are now making more effective links between subjects in order to create more coherent learning opportunities for pupils through themes such as 'inventions that changed the world'. Information and communication technology is used well in some lessons. In Year 3/4, for example, pupils were using laptops with confidence to extend their image-processing skills. The pupils welcome the extra-curricular opportunities, trips and residential visits available to them.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is appropriately deployed, and the plans to support these pupils have clear measurable targets. The school works conscientiously to support individuals who encounter barriers to their learning and development, and takes appropriate steps to help them benefit from the opportunities that it offers. There is a caring and supportive ethos throughout the school.

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?

The headteacher has instigated a range of changes and improvements that have resulted in improved progress in recent months. These have included training for teachers, more rigorous assessment arrangements, and detailed tracking and analysis of every pupil's progress. This has led, for example, to a much clearer approach to identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Improvements in analysing the performance of different groups of pupils also illustrate the school's commitment to equality of opportunity but remains satisfactory because the more able pupils are not all doing as well as they might.

The analysis of the termly assessments of pupils' attainment and progress shows an increasing proportion of pupils to be on track to reach the levels expected for their age. These improvements are not supported well enough by a sharply focused strategy to improve teaching and learning and thereby ensure a rapid improvement in the pupils' attainment, particularly among the more able. Currently, targets are only adequately challenging, and are not demanding enough, particularly for what the more able pupils can achieve, to bring a marked improvement in the school's performance.

Subject leaders are now playing an increased role in the improvement strategy. They are given time to conduct pupil interviews, carry out a book scrutiny of pupils' work and observe lessons. They have identified, for example, the need for more resources and more

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effective deployment of teaching assistants, but currently their work is not focused sharply enough on the effectiveness and impact of teaching on the pupils' learning and progress.

The governing body has, over the last year, gained a very clear picture of the school's performance. The governing body now receives a wide range of information, notably through the headteacher's reports, and its members are now robustly challenging the school to improve its performance. The governing body is becoming increasingly involved in determining the strategic direction for improving the school. The recent allocation of responsibilities for areas of school improvement are intended to allow the governing body to give stronger guidance and hold the school to account for the speed at which improvements are made.

There are satisfactory links with parents, who are kept informed of events and developments in school. The headteacher has met with parents to establish a forum for them to share their views about the school. Arrangements for ensuring that the pupils are as safe as possible are good, as a result of robust monitoring and frequent review of safeguarding procedures by the governing body.

Arrangements to promote community cohesion are satisfactory. Developments have had a positive impact on the school community. An audit of the community has been carried out and an action plan is in place, but its impact beyond the school is, currently, modest.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers are happy with their child's experience at school. Several parents made additional comments on their returned questionnaires. There were two predominant themes within these comments. A number of parents expressed the view that they were pleased and encouraged by the recent changes made by the new headteacher. Others felt

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that their child was not making sufficient progress or having their needs met. A fifth of the parents who responded to the questionnaire shared these views.

The inspectors found that a number of recent changes have resulted in improvements in several areas of the school's work. However, the school's improvement plan does not have a sharp enough focus on teaching and learning to bring further and rapid improvement that will accelerate the progress made by pupils, particularly those who are more able.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Long Buckby 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 50 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 161 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	36	27	54	2	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	46	24	48	2	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	14	28	31	62	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	20	28	56	9	18	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	11	22	33	66	2	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	28	26	52	4	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	26	33	66	1	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)	14	28	24	48	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	26	22	44	10	20	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	28	27	54	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	32	27	54	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	38	26	52	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	34	26	52	3	6	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 pupils' 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.



11 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Long Buckby Junior School, Northampton, NN6 7PX

Thank you for taking the time to talk to me and my colleague. The school provides you with a satisfactory education. You are able to learn in an atmosphere where you are cared for, feel safe, and are confident that any concerns you have will be dealt with quickly.

The teachers make many lessons interesting, but sometimes the tasks they set for you are not planned well enough to build on what you already know and to make sure that you always make good progress. We would like to see you making good progress in every lesson, and have asked your teachers to give some of you work that is more challenging. When you completed your questionnaires, some of you said that you did not know how well you were doing at school. When the teachers mark your work and make comments on it, we have asked them to give you clear guidance about how well you are doing and, most importantly, how you can improve. You can all help by responding to their comments and presenting your work as carefully as you can.

You are making the progress that is expected of you. We would like to see you all making good progress. We have asked the headteacher and teachers to make clearer plans to help you to make faster progress, so that more of you reach higher standards in English and mathematics by the time you get to the end of Year 6.

Many of you enjoy and value the clubs and out-of-school activities you are involved in. I do hope you continue to enjoy all aspects of school life.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Parker

Lead inspector

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