

Longlevens Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115496
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	357760
Inspection dates	12–13 October 2010
Reporting inspector	John Eadie

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	467
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dave Jones
Headteacher	David G Smith
Date of previous school inspection	24 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Thirty-three lessons were visited and 18 teachers observed. Meetings were held with leaders and managers; staff; the chair of and the clerk to the governing body; parents at the start of the school day; and groups of pupils, both formally and informally. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a variety of documentation, including tracking data showing the progress that pupils are making; a range of policies and procedures, particularly those relating to safeguarding; records of monitoring of teaching and learning; and the school development plan. Questionnaires from staff and a sample of pupils were analysed, along with 131 from parents and carers.

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

- Whether pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making the same progress, relative to their abilities, as their classmates
- Whether the gender gap has been closed or are boys still not performing as well as girls as they did in the national assessments in 2009.
- Whether assessment is being used effectively to support pupils' learning and whether they are fully involved in the process.

Information about the school

Longlevens Junior School is larger than the average junior school. The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage, the remainder representing a range of other ethnicities. Very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average. The proportion of pupils who have identified special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Most of these have behavioural, emotional or social difficulties or specific or moderate learning problems. A third of the staff has joined the school since the last inspection just over two years ago. The headteacher returned to the school full time at the start of this term, having been seconded to the National College for the last two years.

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

Longlevens Junior School is a good school. It has coped well with the considerable staff changes of recent years. Attainment fell significantly in the national tests in 2008, but is now clearly on the climb again and has returned to above average. The school has several significant strengths. In particular, the school has forged a very extensive range of partnerships that benefit pupils' learning and well-being outstandingly well. For example, partnerships with secondary schools and other organisations have added to opportunities for learning in English, modern foreign languages and in a number of physical activities and sports. Pupils also benefit from guidance from specialists in art and this helps them to achieve particularly well in this subject.

There are some particularly strong areas of pupils' personal development. For instance, pupils feel exceptionally safe and are very confident that there is someone to turn to if they have a problem. Pupils also make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community. They organise their own charity events and help with hearing pupils from a special school read. Pupils' views are sought regularly and communicated well through the effective school council and pupils are extremely proud of their school. They enjoy school greatly as evidenced by the high attendance figures.

Attainment is above average in English, mathematics and science, although it is not as strong in mathematics as in English. Pupils' progress through the school is good. The challenging targets set for last year's Year 6 were exceeded. However, the school acknowledges that progress in mathematics is not as good as in other subjects. This is because pupils are not always given work that closely matches their abilities or needs and sufficient levels of challenge are not consistently provided for the more able. There are also some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who do not make as much progress as they should. Some effective provision has enabled a minority, particularly those with more significant difficulties, to make good or even outstanding progress, but in general their progress is satisfactory. This is because clear plans are not always made for their learning that precisely match their needs. These pupils are not always appropriately supported in class, which means, for instance, that they do not always understand the teaching points made in lessons.

The quality of teaching is good and some outstanding practice was observed during the inspection. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good and there is an atmosphere of industry and interest in lessons. However, occasionally, pupils spend too long listening rather than learning actively. Teachers use their assessments very well to check on the progress of their class and to identify any pupils in danger of underachieving and effective initiatives are put in place to ensure that they do not fall behind. However, teachers are not using these assessments effectively to help pupils identify their next steps in learning. A significant number of pupils on their questionnaires said that they do

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not know how well they are doing. Teachers mark pupils' work well and there are some excellent examples of pupils responding to this marking. However, indicators of how pupils can improve are not consistently included in marking.

The headteacher, very ably supported by a range of well-focused leadership teams, has carried out a thorough analysis of the school's strengths and areas for development. Monitoring is rigorous and has led to this accurate picture. Many members of the governing body are relatively new and they are not yet fully involved in this process, although they offer satisfactory support. There is a very strong team spirit among staff, the very large majority of whom, on their questionnaires, said that they strongly feel involved in what the school is trying to achieve. The improvements noted in attainment and pupils' progress over the last two years show that the school is well placed to continue on its upward path.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities by ensuring that:
 - clear plans are made for their learning that closely match their needs and teachers include these in their lessons
 - appropriate support is provided in class to enable them to work towards their targets
 - teachers and other staff engage these pupils more effectively during the whole-class parts of lessons to ensure their understanding.
- Raise standards and improve pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics, by ensuring that:
 - pupils are consistently given work that closely matches their abilities
 - more-able pupils are given sufficient levels of challenge in all lessons
 - pupils are given precise next steps for learning and when marking pupils' work, teachers consistently refer to these next steps
 - pupils spend more of each lesson actively involved rather than sitting and listening.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Lessons are typified by a buzz of relevant discussion and hard work. Pupils make good use of the independence that they are given, making sensible choices about how to solve problems or set out their work and present their findings. More-able pupils thoroughly enjoy the challenge when they are set more difficult work, but say that this does not happen often enough, especially in mathematics, and they find it too easy when they do the same work as others in their class. In the best lessons observed, pupils were reflecting conscientiously on the success of their previous learning by reading the teachers' comments and sharing them with their partners. Visits and visitors often stimulate pupils' learning as was seen when pupils were writing reviews of plays that a theatre group had presented, linked to their history topics. Learning sometimes slows when pupils spend too

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long sitting and listening. Some find it difficult to keep pace with the learning expected, while others have understood quickly and begin to lose interest

The difference noted in the performance of boys and girls in the national tests in 2009 has been eliminated and boys are now doing as well as girls. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well and all cope with the curriculum in English. The school has recently changed the management of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and effective plans have been put in place to improve the progress that these pupils are making. However, it is too early to see any impact of the new plans for provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and many of these pupils are not making the same progress as their classmates.

Pupils behave well and are welcoming and positive, showing good levels of concern and consideration for others. This is not always the case and there are isolated instances of inappropriate behaviour in areas such as corridors and cloakrooms. Good behaviour makes a strong contribution to learning in lessons. Pupils take responsibility well and play a full role in the smooth running of the school. Although they have good knowledge of how to lead a healthy lifestyle, they do not always carry this through to good dietary choices. However, they take full advantage of the wide range of sports and clubs available to keep active. Pupils are well prepared for their future as good skills are being developed in terms of styles of working. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. While their moral and social development is particularly strong, their knowledge of the range of cultures and faiths in the United Kingdom is weaker.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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?

Good provision is made for all aspects of pupils' learning and personal development. The care taken of each pupil is particularly strong. All pupils who answered the questionnaire agreed that adults care for them. They are all known as individuals; as a parent put it, 'Despite being a large school, it has the feel of being a family.' There are rigorous procedures to ensure the welfare of vulnerable pupils. The school has recently changed the management of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and good plans have been put in place to improve the progress that these pupils are making. There has not yet been an impact, therefore, on improving progress for these pupils.

The curriculum is well organised and imaginative and engages pupils well. Good links are made between subjects. For instance, pupils were using their history work to practise writing skills. Pupils enjoy a broad range of experiences, for example in their forest school and the drama group. Lessons are interesting and are presented in an engaging way, with good use often made of resources such as interactive whiteboards. A particular strength of teaching is that pupils are often given independence to choose how they will plan their work or present their results.

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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?

The headteacher provides strong leadership and has created effective management teams. There is a very clear and shared commitment to improvement that runs through staff at all levels. All staff were extremely positive on their questionnaires about their pride in being part of the school and the part they play in moving things forward. Weaknesses are accurately ascertained and tackled well. Monitoring is thorough and there are very good systems for checking on the progress of groups and individual pupils. At present, governors rely too much on what they are told by leaders and managers and do not contribute effectively to monitoring. However, they have made a start at finding out for themselves from visits and astute questioning.

Although equality of opportunity is high on the school's agenda, it is only recently that work has been effective in improving provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is because of the good systems for tracking the progress of groups, which identified their relatively weaker performance. Tracking shows that all other groups are performing equally well. The school is a very harmonious community. The school is highly regarded in the local community and is involved well in it. A good start has also been made at improving pupils' awareness of the wider community in terms of links in Europe and the rest of the world. Work to enhance pupils' knowledge of diversity within the United Kingdom is relatively weaker, though plans to improve this are in place.

Safeguarding procedures are rigorous. All checks are carried out thoroughly and these and policies are reviewed regularly. Levels of training are good and almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire regard their children as being kept safe.

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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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The questionnaires returned were significantly more positive than usually found, particularly regarding their children's enjoyment of school, the school keeping them safe, the quality of teaching and the encouragement to lead a healthy lifestyle. There were also a number of positive comments, such as: 'All staff are warm, friendly and approachable' and 'An issue of concern was raised and dealt with really well; honestly and respectfully.' A very small minority of parents do not regard the school as keeping them sufficiently informed about their children's progress. Inspectors have suggested to the school ways in which this might be improved. A small number also commented that they do not consider that their children have sufficient levels of challenge in mathematics. Inspectors consider that levels of challenge in mathematics could be improved, particularly for the more able.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Longlevens 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 131 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 467 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	70	53	58	44	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	80	61	50	38	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	32	24	77	59	7	5	6	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	35	65	50	7	5	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	59	45	64	49	3	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	34	73	56	6	5	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	28	86	66	4	3	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)	48	37	68	52	5	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	33	70	53	6	5	3	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	44	34	70	53	8	6	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	23	75	57	9	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	53	40	59	45	8	6	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	67	51	55	42	3	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 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.



14 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Longlevens Junior School, Gloucester, GL2 0AL

Thank you so much for your welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you and seeing how hard you work. All of you who completed our questionnaires said that you enjoy school and we are not surprised as it is a good school that provides you with lots of interesting things to do.

These are the best things we found about your school:

- You make an excellent contribution to helping the school run smoothly, by being peer mediators or on the school council, for example.
- You told us that you feel exceptionally safe in school and this is because all adults look after you really well. Most of you attend school very regularly, showing that you enjoy it and do not want to miss anything.
- Your school has developed outstanding partnerships with other schools and organisations. This means that you are benefiting from specialist teaching in French, physical education and art, as well as enjoying lots of other opportunities.
- The progress you make in English and mathematics is improving and is good. You reach standards that are higher than most children in these subjects.
- Your teachers plan interesting things for lessons and this helps you to learn well.
- Your headteacher and staff have good plans to make your school even better

There are two things we have suggested could be improved:

- Those of you who find your work difficult are not always given clear plans to help you improve. You are not always supported properly in class and this means that you do not always understand what you are meant to be learning.
- You could be making better progress, especially in mathematics, because you are not always given work that matches your abilities, particularly those of you who find it easy. You are also not always clear on what you need to do to improve your work and in some lessons you spend too long sitting and listening.

I am sure you will do your best to help by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

John Eadie

Lead inspector

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