

Loddon Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131192
Local Authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	360228
Inspection dates	29–30 September 2010
Reporting inspector	John Earish

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	417
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Stephen Newton
Headteacher	Heather Holt
Date of previous school inspection	22 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 28 lessons with 14 teachers being seen. Meetings were held with parents and carers, governors, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school documentation including teachers' planning, assessment information, safeguarding policies and samples of pupils' work. Inspectors analysed 126 questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- The levels of pupils' attainment and progress, especially in Key Stage 1, and how well teaching contributes to pupils' learning.
- The use of assessment and support systems to drive improvement.
- The roles of leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, in securing and sustaining improvements, particularly in relation to pupils' attainment and progress and the quality of teaching.
- The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage to establish if it is as good as the school indicates.

Information about the school

The school is much larger than the national average. About a third of all pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. This includes a very small minority who are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. However, this is not evenly distributed throughout the school, as almost half the children in the Foundation Stage Unit are learning to speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils eligible to take a free school meal is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and or/disabilities is lower than average. These pupils' needs cover a wide range, including behavioural, emotional and social problems, autistic spectrum disorder as well as speech, language and physical disabilities. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a separate Foundation Stage Unit.

The school has a number of awards, including Healthy School accreditation and an Activemark for its work in sport. The before and after-school clubs, managed by a private provider, did not form part of this inspection

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

Loddon is a rapidly improving school that provides a satisfactory standard of education. Leaders have successfully improved teaching since the last inspection and the good start that children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage is now built on well in the rest of the school. Consequently, pupils' attainment is rising and is above average overall by the end of Year 6, being stronger in English and science than in mathematics. Most pupils now make the progress expected of them and a number are exceeding this level, so that achievement is satisfactory overall.

There are several contributory factors to the faster progress being made by most pupils. Evidence from the school's evaluations shows the amount of good or better teaching is increasing. This is the result of actions based upon the outcomes of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching by the headteacher and senior managers. However, teaching is not yet consistently good across all classes, which results in uneven progress. There were some good examples of teachers involving pupils in assessing how well they are doing. However, this is not consistent across all classes with the result that there are missed opportunities for pupils to clarify what they need to do to improve.

Another factor is that pupils are well cared for and feel safe. As a consequence, they enjoy learning and their personal development is good. Teachers are now much better at tracking pupils' performance so they can quickly identify underachievement and deal with it. The school's good efforts to promote positive values are reflected in the pupils' good understanding of the importance of staying healthy and their good contribution to the school and wider community.

The satisfactory curriculum has been adapted to meet the needs of the different groups within the classes. However, it does not yet ensure that there are enough opportunities in some lessons for pupils, especially the higher attainers, to work independently and use their initiative to solve problems, particularly in mathematics. The excellent range of extra-curricular activities supports other aspects of pupils' personal development well. The pupils really enjoy and appreciate these activities.

The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. Pupils show good concern for the needs of others by raising funds for charity, but they have limited knowledge or experience of multicultural diversity within this country or beyond.

Members of staff and the governing body share the headteacher's ambitions and aspirations for the school. Senior leaders are driving improvement well and have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. They have successfully raised attainment in Key Stage 1 and are ensuring continued improvements in pupils' progress. As a result of the recent high turnover of staff, the roles and influence of middle managers are still being

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developed. Consequently the school's current capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by ensuring that all adults capitalise on opportunities during lessons for pupils, especially the higher attainers, to work independently to explore their ideas and use their initiative to solve problems, especially in mathematics.
- Strengthen the school's contribution to community cohesion by giving pupils more opportunities to learn about cultures other than their own and about life in other parts of the United Kingdom and abroad.
- Increase the opportunities for pupils to be fully involved in assessing for themselves how well they are doing.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are achieving well against the national expectations by the end of Reception. Attainment is above average by the start of Year 1. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 are building well on this good start to their education. Attainment is rising across the school as the impact of improvements to teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 begins to filter through to other year groups. This has yet to work through to the end of Key Stage 2. However, things bode well for the future since pupils in Years 3 and 4 are building well on the progress they have already made. Pupils who have difficulty reading and writing are also making satisfactory progress overall, but make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Those speaking English as an additional language are making good progress because of the good quality support they receive.

Pupils' good behaviour and their enthusiasm for learning contribute significantly to the better progress being seen in an increasing number of lessons. In a numeracy lesson, for example, pupils learnt quickly how to use mathematical language accurately during an investigation about odd and even numbers. They were fully engaged and were given work that provided the right level of challenge. During the activity afternoon, the Eco warriors listened to each other very carefully and showed considerable interest and perseverance as they worked out how they would meet the criteria for the Bronze Eco Award. They then started designing and making bird feeders using a range of fruits and seeds. Everyone was involved and they helped and supported each other well.

Pupils enjoy the opportunities that the school has to offer them. They attend regularly, and speak enthusiastically about the many sporting clubs and activities organised for them. Pupils lead healthy lifestyles and this is reflected in the school's Activemark and Healthy School accreditation. A small minority of parents and carers had concerns about behaviour. However, inspectors observed good behaviour in classrooms and on the playground. Pupils feel safe at school. They are adamant that adults deal with any bullying quickly and effectively. The active school council has made several changes, including improvements to the school playground. Their contribution to the community is good. Pupils work together cooperatively and leave the school as confident, well-rounded individuals.

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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	2
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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	2
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?

Pupils make the most progress when teachers have high expectations of how much they can achieve, and individuals have work well matched to their needs. For example, Year 5 pupils were able to develop narrative writing well because the work was well matched to the individuals within the class. Pupils rose to this challenge and the teacher moved from group to group using questions well to challenge, clarify and move pupils on to the next stage of learning. However, there are still occasions where teachers do not pitch work at suitably challenging levels or spend too much time explaining tasks, so that at times the pupils do not learn as well as they should.

Adults place pupils' well-being at the centre of their work and this makes the school a happy place to be. There are good partnerships with outside agencies to get additional support when it is needed and skilled teaching assistants also make a good contribution to the learning of pupils who need extra help with their work. However, there is scope to include pupils more in their own assessment so they have an even clearer understanding of what they must do to improve. The school works well with parents, volunteers and a variety of external agencies to support those children most at risk.

The school has carefully adapted the curriculum to make it challenging, relevant and exciting by making thematic links between the different areas of learning. Improvements to the planning of literacy and numeracy are helping to raise attainment in English and mathematics. However, planning does not always identify sufficient opportunities for

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pupils to work independently and use their initiative to solve problems to ensure they are always fully challenged.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders have ensured that the school has moved forward since the last inspection, despite significant turbulence in staffing. Recent staff appointments have strengthened relationships and teamwork as well as increasing the range of expertise within the school. The headteacher and senior staff are good at embedding ambition and driving improvement, which has resulted in a shared vision for improvement across the school. Teaching and learning are regularly monitored and careful self- evaluation has led to the accurate identification of key areas for improvement. This has been central to the recent successes in the drive for improvement. Governors ensure that safeguarding procedures are of good quality and that all statutory requirements, including child protection and risk assessment, are regularly reviewed and approved. The work of the governors shows they are becoming much more involved in the strategic management of the school. Although they are starting to hold the school to account for its work, they are not yet sufficiently involved in checking on the school's progress.

The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. Leaders respond well to local needs and work closely with other agencies to promote learning. However, action planning to improve community cohesion further has only just been completed. This rightly focuses on strengthening pupils' knowledge of life beyond the local community. The school is active and effective in tackling discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily. It is addressing this with some success but has yet to ensure that all children make equally good progress in all lessons.

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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	2
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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Consistently good or better teaching means that children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Consequently, their attainment is above the levels expected for the age group by the end of the Reception Year, reflecting good progress from their different starting points. Children are exceptionally well cared for, with teachers and Early Years Practitioners giving sensitive help to support learning. Staff work closely with the children and talk to them frequently on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. Children show positive attitudes to learning, form good relationships with others and remain engaged in activities, both indoors and outside, often finding out things for themselves, for example when using computers or the interactive whiteboard. Adults take good account of children's different starting points to ensure that there are good levels of challenge in lessons. This means there is a good pace to learning, with children willingly supporting each other and sensibly choosing where they are going to work. Transition arrangements are outstanding and ensure a smooth transfer at the end of Reception. Parents are extremely pleased with this provision.

Provision is well led and managed. Leaders monitor children's progress closely and are making increasingly sharp use of assessment information to look for trends in attainment over time, so that any comparative areas of weakness can be tackled even more quickly. For example, they have identified the need to raise boys' attainment, especially in reading and writing. They are also working to extend further the language of children at the very early stages of learning English.

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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

About a quarter of parents returned questionnaires. Most parents and carers believe their children enjoy school and are kept safe. A small minority had concerns about behaviour and the progress their children were making. Inspectors interviewed a random selection of thirty pupils drawn from all classes as well as parents and carers. They found that behaviour was good and that pupils felt safe. The school acknowledges that pupils previously did not build on the good progress they made in the Foundation Stage Unit. Inspection evidence shows this is no longer the case and progress is improving across the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Loddon Primary 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 126 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 417 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	44	63	50	7	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	50	40	74	59	2	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	30	24	84	67	12	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	23	67	53	22	17	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	35	28	73	58	9	7	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	33	64	51	14	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	51	40	68	54	3	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)	41	33	63	50	12	10	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	25	71	56	22	17	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	15	55	44	30	24	11	9
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	20	64	51	24	19	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	27	21	55	44	23	18	12	10
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	32	25	72	57	17	13	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.



1 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Loddon Primary School, Reading RG6 7LR

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed looking at your work, seeing you in lessons and talking to so many of you. We were pleased to hear that you like your school very much.

Yours is a satisfactory school. This means that there are lots of things that it does well, but also there are some things that could be better.

We were particularly impressed that you enjoy your school and want to do well. You behave well and help and support each other in all that you do. You have a good knowledge of how to stay healthy. You help the school to run smoothly and are keen to ensure that everyone does their bit to conserve resources and protect the school environment. Many of you said that you found the work of the school council and playground mediators very helpful. Well done, councillors and mediators!

You also told us that you find your lessons interesting and usually challenging. To help you make faster progress, we are asking your teachers to give you more opportunities to use your own initiative during lessons and to work independently, especially in mathematics. We have also asked them to make sure that you have more chances to assess for yourselves how well you are doing. This will help you have an even better understanding of how to improve your work. The teachers are also going to give you more opportunities to learn about cultures other than your own. They have some exciting ideas for making links with other schools.

Each of you can play your part in making this school even better by continuing to work hard to meet the targets teachers set you.

Yours sincerely

John Earish

Lead Inspector

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