

Loddon Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121203
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	358960
Inspection dates	5–6 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Roderick Passant

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	146
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Juliet Clifton-Parks
Headteacher	Amanda Walden
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2008
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They saw six teachers teaching seven lessons. In addition a number of brief observations were made of lessons and the support and intervention programmes. They met with the headteacher, school leaders, representatives of the governing body and a group of Year 2 pupils. They also had informal conversations with parents and carers at the beginning of the day and with pupils throughout the inspection. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of school policies and documentation such as those associated with child protection and the school improvement plan. In addition, they scrutinised the 44 parents' and carers' responses to questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effective are the school's leadership's strategies for raising attainment and accelerating the progress of all pupils and specifically boys, particularly for reading?
- How effectively does the school develop pupils' cultural development?

Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average primary. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average although the proportion with statements detailing their educational needs is high. The school has gained the silver Eco-schools award. It also has Activemark Accreditation. The school, through the governors, operates a breakfast and after-school club. It also acts as a 'front door' for the Loddon Area Children's Centre, separately managed on the same site. Sure Start staff and other professionals use the school to deliver a range of services to support families in the area, such as the weekly baby clinic. There is a part-time nursery that runs in the morning and children join the Reception class in the autumn term of the year they turn five, some attending part-time. There are two Reception classes and Years 1 and 2 are taught in three mixed-age classes. There have been significant staff changes since the last 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Pupils are making good progress and achieving well. In recent years attainment at the end of Year 2 has been broadly average. However, pupils' attainment is improving and current Year 2 is on track for to reach above average attainment. This is because the school has tackled the key issue identified in the last report relating to progress in the Reception year particularly well. Children in Reception are making good progress and attainment shows year-on-year improvement over the past three years. Pupils joined Year 1 this year with above average attainment. The school is capitalising on this in Key Stage 1 by securing good progress in lessons so that pupils' improved attainment is built on through the school.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are known and valued as individuals and this means that they are confident and they have a positive view of themselves. They know and understand the school rules. They develop inclusive attitudes and respect for each other. They develop skills of reflection and empathy and this is reflected in their kindness and compassion, demonstrated in their charitable fund-raising. Pupils are given good opportunities to work and play together. They are also encouraged to solve differences between themselves and take responsibility for their behaviour. Behaviour in the school is good and pupils feel safe. They are curious about the world around them, have good general knowledge and participate in the arts with enthusiasm. Although the curriculum provides opportunities to explore other countries, pupils have relatively limited knowledge how other children live. While pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, cultural development is the weaker element.

The strong care and warm, positive relationships that adults in the school have with the pupils underpin the pupils' good learning and personal development. The breakfast and after school clubs provide outstanding care and provision.

Pupils make good progress in lessons because teaching and learning are good. Teachers manage the mixed age classes well, supported effectively by experienced teaching assistants. Staff have high expectations of the pupils. On occasions, the sequence of steps in the learning in lessons is not fully clear. This is because teachers do not always have a precise enough view of what they want pupils to have achieved by the end of the lesson and, working backwards from this, do not always ensure that the steps are given the necessary time or build logically to that end point.

The school's senior leadership are clear about the school's priorities and are accurate in their self-evaluation. The school knows itself well. The track record of improvements since the last inspection demonstrates its good capacity for sustained improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that in planning lessons teachers are always clear about the precise objectives for the lesson, and give due attention to the steps needed to reach that objective.
- Broaden pupils' experience of the world and how other children live by:
 - establishing links with other schools with contrasting characteristics within this country and abroad.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

There is a positive work ethos in classrooms. Pupils are engaged, curious, enjoy learning and work well with each other. They demonstrate a good understanding of the sounds that make up a word (phonics) because teachers model good speaking and listening skills well so pupils are able to hear the sounds. Pupils show the confidence and strategies to tackle 'tricky' words in their reading because teachers also model reading well, using the big books and focus closely on phonics. Writing is good, often enhanced through the creation of a real or an invented audience. Pupils are making good progress in developing a wider and richer vocabulary because there is a good link between speaking, reading and writing skills in lessons.

Higher attaining pupils are now being challenged more effectively and the school forecasts that about a third of pupils will attain the higher levels. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar good progress to their peers, and individuals given particular support sometimes make excellent progress. In a numbers count session, the pupil involved learned outstandingly well because of the rich range of resources and approaches used to constantly reinforce the focus of the lesson and the skilled questioning to prompt thinking. Within lessons boys and girls respond with equal enthusiasm and are making similar progress. The school has invested in new books specifically targeted towards encouraging boys.

Pupils have a good understanding of what it means to have a healthy lifestyle. They take advantage of the 'huff and puff' equipment in the playground and the many sporting and active opportunities that the school provides. Over two thirds of the pupils walk to school. The numbers have increased because of the school's travel plan. Pupils contribute well to the school and local community, through, for example, their links with the church, their Christmas productions shared with local groups and the 'secret garden' that they tend and share with the adjacent sheltered accommodation for the elderly. They take their responsibilities as 'buddies', members of the school council and their eco-work very seriously. Year 2 pupils are positive role models in the mixed-age classes.

The school prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education. It gives them an effective foundation of basic skills and positive attitudes towards and enjoyment of learning. They develop skills of working independently and in teams. Attendance is above average.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

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	3
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	2
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?

Teachers have very warm relationships with the pupils, which ensure that pupils grow in confidence and do not get anxious if they make a mistake. Adults also listen to pupils particularly well, valuing their contribution. Teachers are enthusiastic and use a variety of approaches, including effective use of the interactive white boards, to promote and maintain pupils' interest. Teachers have good subject knowledge so are confident in managing more open-ended approaches. Questioning is good, both to challenge and extend thinking and to check on learning. By giving them time to rehearse their ideas with their talk partner, teachers promote pupils' independence and independent thinking well. Learning support assistants are confident and skilled and they and other adult helpers are deployed and managed well to support specific groups of pupils. Teachers plan interesting lessons, but on occasion the objective of the lesson is not defined precisely enough so that the steps and sequence in learning do not always build towards that objective. In these lessons pace of learning drops.

Teachers have a good understanding of where pupils are in their learning because they use specialised assessment materials. Pupils are often encouraged to evaluate their learning towards the end of a lesson with simple thumbs up or down which helps the teacher's future planning. Marking is detailed, with supportive comments and a consistent approach to using stamps to indicate whether the teacher judges that pupils have fully

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achieved the lesson objective. Most feedback about how to improve their work is done orally but pupils are not always clear about this.

Imaginative planning links subjects together well and provides a broad and rich range of learning experiences. These capture and build on pupils' interests and enthusiasms and well as providing different contexts to reinforce reading, writing, number and information and communication technology skills. There is good enrichment through visitors, trips and wide range of clubs. There are good links with specialist agencies to extend and support pupils learning.

There is a strong formal and informal network of support both for pupils and their families, which help overcome barriers to learning. Close work with Sure Start staff and the children's centre is effective. The strengths of the breakfast and after school clubs make a significant contribution to pupils' well-being. The transition into the school, between year groups and to the junior school is thorough and planned well.

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 leads the school well. Despite the significant staffing changes since the last inspection, with new staff at the start of their careers, she has developed a team of staff with a strong sense of common purpose and shared values. There is a sustained focus on ensuring pupils make good progress. The fact that teaching is good says a great deal for the mentoring and support that has taken place. The school's focus on developing staff skills in the use of assessment has led to greater accuracy and informs the regular periodic assessments and monitoring of pupils' progress, allowing for early identification of the need for additional support. Targets for the rate of pupils' progress are appropriately challenging. The school is committed to working in partnership with parents and carers. It listens to feedback from parents, carers and pupils, both informally and through more formal procedures to bring about further improvements.

The governing body provides good strategic leadership. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to develop and the governing body therefore provides informed challenge and support. It undertakes its own rigorous self-evaluation and ensures that the school meets statutory requirements. Safeguarding is good. Robust procedures are understood and managed well by all staff. Safeguarding permeates all aspects of school life including the curriculum. The school rightly pays particular attention to problems of double parking when parents pick up their children at the end of the day. It continues to stress its concerns to parents involved and has also taken advice from the police and local authority.

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The school works hard to remove barriers to learning and ensure that it is inclusive, for example ensuring that all pupils are able to take part in trips, performances and assemblies. There is close monitoring of all pupils and the performance of specific groups and the equality scheme is monitored as part of the school development plan.

The school knows its immediate community well and does much to support parents and carers by meeting the core offer for extended schools. It has effective local links, for example, with the elderly residents in sheltered housing next door to the school. It is a focus for the community and is used by the community. Although the curriculum promotes some understanding of how other people live this is not yet underpinned through links with other schools in the UK or abroad.

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	2
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	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good leadership and the creation of a strong team of staff have brought about significant improvements to the Early Years Foundation Stage. There is now a shared unit with extensive indoor and outdoor facilities. Provision in the Nursery class remains strong. As a result, attainment on entry to the Reception class, although subject to variation, is broadly as expected for the age-group. The exception is in speech and language skills, which are also at an earlier stage of development on entry to the school. A close focus on this has ensured children are now making good progress in both Nursery and Reception classes and attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is rising year on year. Last year it was above average. The leader makes very good use of assessment information to adjust the balance and focus of the work and has an excellent understanding of which aspects of provision are still in the process of development. For example, the next area to be targeted is mathematics work.

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Teaching by adults is good, making effective use of stimulating resources. There is good formal and informal adult interaction with children to promote language skills. The planning is rigorous and ensures that the pitch of adult led activities provide appropriate challenge and support and allows for flexible organisation and groupings. The unobtrusive management of the learning and children is often very skilled. There is a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. The result is that children are enthusiastic, enjoy learning and develop the skills to learn. Their behaviour is good and they learn to take turns and work and play with each other. Independence is fostered consistently. Links with parents are strong as evidenced in the comments in the learning journey diaries and biographies. These record the significant steps in children's learning and are based on good use of ongoing assessment which informs the next steps. Staff meet children's welfare needs well.

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	1

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of positive responses to most questions was above average. A few parents and carers had concerns about the school's management of behaviour. The school has reviewed its behaviour policy in the light of an earlier parental consultation to ensure a consistent approach. Inspection evidence shows that pupils' behaviour is good. A small minority of responses indicated dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of the school's leadership and management, although there were few comments to show why they felt this way. These responses do not align with the school's survey in March 2011 where comments about the school's communication, how problems are listened to and dealt with, the encouragement of parents and carers to be involved, interaction with teachers and the presence of the headteacher on the playground to greet and talk to parents and carers are all very positive. The inspectors judged leadership and management as good at all levels.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Loddon Infant and Nursery 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 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 146 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	57	18	41	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	39	26	59	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	20	45	18	41	5	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	48	19	43	3	7	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	19	43	22	50	2	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	45	18	41	4	9	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	36	25	57	3	7	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)	21	48	19	43	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	45	19	43	5	11	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	32	19	43	5	11	3	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	30	23	52	7	16	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	34	18	41	8	18	2	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	41	24	55	2	5	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



9 May 2011

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Loddon Infant and Nursery School, Norwich NR14 6JX

Thank you for being so welcoming when I visited your school and telling me all about it. You go to a good school. You enjoy learning and do well in your work, so you make good progress. By the end of Year 2, your work is at a level similar to that in many schools and it is getting better. The school is helping you to grow up well as thoughtful, considerate children. You clearly understand the school's rules so your behaviour is good. You have good opportunities to play and work together and are confident to talk about your ideas and to adults if you are upset. I am glad that you feel safe in school.

All adults in the school care a great deal about you and help you. Teachers are skilled and you do lots of interesting things. I have asked them to ensure that they are even clearer what it is they want you to have learnt by the end of the lesson, so that each step in the lesson builds to that point. You are obviously very interested in what is happening in the world. However, at the moment you have a limited experience of how other children live. I have therefore also asked the headteacher to broaden your experience of how other children live by making links with other schools within this country and abroad.

The school has got even better since it was last inspected. I am sure that this will continue, especially if you continue to maintain your interest and enjoyment of learning. You can all help it improve by taking every opportunity to get the most out of the lessons and the experiences the school provides.

Yours sincerely

Roderick Passant

Lead inspector

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