

Longvernal Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109107
Local Authority	Bath And North East Somerset
Inspection number	377872
Inspection dates	15–16 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Christine Huard

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	85
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diane Mears
Headteacher	Jane Richardson
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed eight lessons or parts of lessons. Four teachers were observed teaching. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and pupils. Parents and carers were spoken to, to seek their views, as they accompanied their children to school in the morning. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at some of the documentation. The documentation included the school development plan, monitoring, tracking and assessment information, as well as planning and the governing body minutes. The school's procedures for ensuring pupils' safety were scrutinised closely. In addition, 32 parental questionnaires were analysed, together with those returned by staff and pupils.

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

- The effectiveness of strategies employed to improve attainment and progress, particularly in mathematics and reading across the school.
- The effectiveness with which assessment is used to ensure that tasks are matched closely to pupils' needs and how well marking helps pupils to move forward in their learning.
- The effectiveness of actions taken to ensure that the poor behaviour of a few does not have a negative impact on the learning of the majority.
- The actions taken by the leadership to ensure that there is consistency in the quality of provision to enable pupils to make at least satisfactory progress.

Information about the school

Longvernal Primary School is smaller than the average primary school. It serves an area on the outskirts of Midsomer Norton and draws its pupils from a wide area. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high, as is the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs. There is a wide range of special educational needs within the school, but the most common are related to moderate learning difficulties, behaviour management, and speech and communication. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. There is a much greater level of movement into and out of the school than is seen in most schools. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are catered for in a joint Reception Year and Year 1 class. The school has a number of awards and holds Healthy Schools status.

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

2

Main findings

Longvernal Primary School provides a satisfactory quality of education. The last two years have seen significant improvements in the leadership of the school, staff stability and, consequently, an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, attainment is rising and previous underachievement is being eradicated swiftly. Staff morale has grown and there is good evidence that staff now work well together as a team. Parents and carers are extremely supportive of the school's work and all those who returned their questionnaires were happy with their children's experiences of school.

Although pupils' progress from their starting points is satisfactory, their progress is accelerating and they are making better progress than in the past. Pupils across the school are making good progress in English and attainment is close to average from low starting points. Attainment in mathematics is slightly below average because in the past few years pupils have not made as much progress as they should. That is because there was a lack of consistency in the teaching methods and the vocabulary used to teach mathematics. Pupils had too few opportunities to apply their skills and knowledge and teachers' subject knowledge was not always secure, so mathematical concepts were not always taught effectively. The systems that have been put in place, including a new policy to ensure consistency in the way mathematics is taught, are beginning to have a positive impact on the pupils' level of understanding and confidence to tackle mathematics. Procedures and teaching practices are not yet embedded for mathematics and consequently the full impact on pupils' attainment has yet to be seen.

Reception-Year children make good progress in their learning because teaching is effective and the curriculum meets their needs well. The secure start provides a very good springboard to further learning and pupils are continuing to make good progress across Years 1 and 2. As a result, the attainment of pupils now in Years 1 and 2 is much closer to average than has been seen previously. While all of teaching observed during the inspection was at least satisfactory and good lessons were observed, there are still some teaching weaknesses, which means that pupils do not make consistently good progress over time. Procedures for assessing pupils' learning have become much more robust. While assessment is used to group pupils effectively, the tasks set for some individuals and groups are not always pitched at the correct level or are inappropriate. In addition, initial input to the lesson by teachers is sometimes too long. That means pupils become fidgety and lose

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concentration, and sometimes have too little time to complete tasks.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and have a good understanding of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle, reflecting well Longvernal's Healthy Schools status. Inspectors found pupils to be polite and considerate. A new behaviour policy has been produced and it is implemented effectively. As a result, there is a consistent approach to behaviour management throughout the school. Pupils show a good knowledge and understanding of the rewards and sanctions and are keen to follow school rules. Behaviour is good. Pupils say that behaviour has improved since the new systems have been adopted and lessons are no longer disrupted by poor behaviour. Attendance is improving and is broadly average. Nevertheless, too many pupils are taken out of school for holidays in term time, despite the school's best efforts to discourage this. The curriculum has been adapted effectively to meet the needs of pupils and the use of, for instance, Forest School activities appeals to and motivates pupils effectively to learn. The school cares well for its pupils and provides good pastoral support for them.

The school's self-evaluation is robust, is suitably analytical and used effectively to drive improvement. Leaders demonstrate a very good knowledge and understanding of where the school is currently placed and its main strengths and weaknesses. That, combined with much improved teaching, leadership, management, and academic outcomes, demonstrates that the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

Up to 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment in mathematics by July 2012 by:
 - giving pupils enough opportunities to use and apply the skills and knowledge that they are gaining
 - ensuring that teachers' subject knowledge is always secure
 - ensuring that methods of teaching and the use of mathematical vocabulary is consistent throughout the school.

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that tasks set in lessons are matched more closely to the individual or group needs of pupils
 - keeping the pace of lessons brisk by ensuring input sessions are brief and well focused, and by giving pupils sufficient time to complete written tasks.

- Work more actively with parents and carers to promote good attendance and

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discourage the taking of holidays in term time.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Generally, pupils listen well in lessons and answer questions enthusiastically. They work well together in pairs and small groups. That was particularly evident in a lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6 who were undertaking a problem-solving activity. They discussed and teased out the methodology they should use to solve the problem and were beginning to demonstrate that they understood the importance of logical and sequential thinking. Pupils’ achievement is satisfactory and they enjoy school life. From low starting points, pupils have made much improved progress during the last two years. Pupils’ reading and writing has improved greatly because of a more consistent approach to teaching literacy throughout the school. Pupils are encouraged to discuss and plan their writing much more rigorously and are very interested in the writing tasks given to them. For example, in a literacy lesson, pupils in Years 5 and 6 wrote an account of Perseus and his meetings with Medusa and the gorgons. They acted out the story – which helped to reinforce the sequence of events and the names of the characters – and then carefully devised a plan to help them structure their writing. Progress in mathematics is also improving, but pupils are not yet sufficiently confident in applying the knowledge and skills that they have gained. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from individual and small group support and their progress has improved over the last year and is in line with that of their peers. Pupils are competent at using information and communication technology (ICT). That, together with their rapidly improving academic progress and personal development, ensures they are prepared appropriately for their future lives.

Pupils make a good contribution to the day-to-day life of the school and are thoughtful and reflective. They talk eagerly about their link with a school in Uganda and are developing a good understanding and knowledge of other faiths and cultures. However, their understanding of the cultural diversity in the United Kingdom is more limited.

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

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

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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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Although the standard of teaching and learning has improved greatly over the last year, there is still some variation in its quality, which means that pupils do not always get consistently good teaching. The curriculum has been adapted effectively to meet the learning needs of the pupils. Tasks are usually interesting and pupils are well motivated to learn. The pupils have appropriate opportunities to share ideas with each other and in small groups. That sustains their interest, improves their social and linguistic skills, and increases their motivation to learn. Pupils are beginning to develop independence though opportunities to check and assess their own work. Since the previous inspection, assessment systems have been improved and there is more information available as to how much progress pupils are making. Teachers are using the information to ensure that tasks are set at different levels, but do not always ensure that work matches pupils' capabilities. At times, teachers are not sufficiently aware that some pupils need a completely different task in order to ensure their specific needs are met. Marking encourages pupils to assess and improve their work and, over the last year, has become much more consistent across all classes.

Pupils have the opportunity to contribute their own ideas to the curriculum and, as a result, it is enhanced by a wide range of activities which motivate and interest them and increase their enjoyment. They have ample opportunities to consolidate their basic skills across the curriculum, particularly in English. Opportunities to develop problem-solving skills are now planned and implemented more consistently across the whole school. The school has established a number of partnerships and links which broaden pupils' horizons. A wide range of other events, such as engaging in a 'Dragon's Den' challenge and participation in Bath Spa's pupil parliament, enrich pupils' learning further. Out-of-school clubs are supported well; these embrace a wide range of topics from cooking to sewing, as well as a variety of sports.

The school shows a high level of care for its pupils, particularly those whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable. A well-run breakfast club supplies a healthy breakfast as well as a range of appropriate activities prior to the school day. A wide range of links with outside agencies ensures that pupils with special

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educational needs and/or difficulties receive suitable support which enables them to make at least the expected progress in lessons. Pupils joining the school are welcomed and transition arrangements are managed effectively. The school is beginning to work with parents and carers more effectively in order to improve attendance. It is working particularly to reduce the number of holidays taken in term time by reinforcing the message that, in order to learn effectively, pupils need to be in school regularly.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and is driving improvement effectively. Leaders are focused very well on improving achievement and accelerating pupils' progress, while maintaining the strengths that make the school a happy and secure place for learning. Since the headteacher's appointment, the quality of monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance has improved greatly. Senior leaders have been involved actively and effectively in monitoring and observing lessons, and in examining planning and pupils' work. The lessons learnt have been relayed to staff and this has led to rapidly improving teaching. Leaders are very well aware of where weaknesses remain and strategies for addressing these have been planned. Systems and policies are now in place to ensure continuity should a member of staff leave. The initiatives to bring about improvement are having a positive impact on pupils' attainment. However, leaders recognise that teaching requires further improvement and mathematics policies are not embedded.

The governing body is effective. It has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and provides good support while challenging the school's performance effectively. It has ensured that safeguarding procedures are robust. It monitors that aspect of the school's work rigorously and regular health and safety checks are carried out taking into account the views of both parents, carers and pupils. Leaders endeavour to ensure that pupils, whatever their ethnic or cultural background, are valued and are free from discrimination. They monitor the performance of different groups of pupils closely and ensure, for example, that pupils who join the school are given the support they need to settle and become part of the school community quickly. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. While local and international links are strong, the pupils have a more limited understanding of the range of religious, ethnic and cultural diversity in the United

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Kingdom. The school provides many opportunities for parents and carers to become involved in their children’s learning and initiatives such as family learning are useful and valued. Workshop sessions, for example in mathematics, enable parents and carers to get to grips with their children’s learning in a practical way.

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	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

Children make good progress in the Reception class. High priority is given to developing children’s personal and social skills. Children are given plenty of opportunities to share and take turns and they are taught to listen carefully and to follow classroom routines. A good feature is the emphasis placed on developing children’s communication skills. Role-play areas enable children to develop their imaginative and language skills suitably and staff are good at promoting language in role-play situations. More structured activities, such as learning letter sounds, enable children to improve their speaking and listening skills and acquire early reading skills. There is a lively and interesting outside area where a wide range of equipment provides good experiences across all areas of learning. Although teaching is good, there are occasions when a distracted child will not be brought back on task quickly enough. There is a good balance between adult-led activities and those initiated by the children themselves. A ‘choice board’ enables children to select activities for themselves and take some responsibility for their own learning. In addition, the use of Forest School activities excites children, promotes independence and enables them to gain confidence and a knowledge and understanding of life beyond the classroom.

The leader has analysed and evaluated practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage and has used the results to identify key areas for improvement. That shows a very

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good knowledge of the needs of the young children and identifies how things can be made better. Children’s progress is tracked carefully through the school year. Observations are evaluative and provide good information about children’s learning and what their next learning steps are. That is particularly pertinent at the start of the academic year when it is important that observations establish what children can and cannot do to inform future planning.

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

There was an above-average return of questionnaires by the parents and carers. They are extremely supportive of the school. The vast majority of parents and carers feel that they are well informed about the progress their children make and all think that their children make good progress. They think that their children are also supported well in their learning. Almost all parents and carers judge that the school is led and managed effectively. Many positive comments were made, which can be summed up by that of one parent; ‘The teacher makes school magical for my son. As you walk around, you can see a child-centred, personalised approach to learning. It cares for every child.’

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Longvernal 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 32 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 85 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	75	8	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	63	12	37	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	18	56	13	41	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	66	11	34	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	69	9	28	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	23	72	8	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	72	9	28	0	0	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)	17	53	13	41	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	23	72	7	22	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	44	15	47	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	47	13	41	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	14	44	17	53	0	0	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	22	69	10	31	0	0	0	0

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.

19 September 2011

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Longvernal Primary School, Midsomer Norton BA3 2LP

- Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. You were polite and friendly and helped us to learn a lot about what you do and what you enjoy. Your school gives you a satisfactory education and is improving rapidly. It is a friendly and happy place in which to work and play.

What we found about your school

- You enjoy coming to school and behave well.
- You achieve the standards you should in English and are doing much better in mathematics than previously, although this is still not quite as good as it should be.
- You show a good understanding of how to live healthily and how to stay safe.
- You have an exciting curriculum and this inspires you to learn. We think your Forest School area is super.
- You benefit from a good range of after-school clubs as well as some interesting visits and visitors.
- Your headteacher and teachers are working very hard to help you do better.

What we have asked your school to do now

- We have asked the teachers to make sure they all use the same methods and mathematical vocabulary when they are teaching you. We have also asked that they give you more problems to solve so that you learn how to use and apply the skills and knowledge you have gained.
- We have asked the teachers to make sure that the work that they give you builds on to what you already know and understand. We want them to ensure that tasks are always matched to your needs. We also want you to be given sufficient time to complete tasks.
- We have asked your teachers to encourage your parents and carers not to take you on holiday during term times because, if you are not in school, you cannot learn and make progress.

We are sure that you will do all you can to help all adults who work with you to make your school even better.

Yours sincerely
Christine Huard
Lead Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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