

Long Knowle Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	104320
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	377063
Inspection dates	27–28 March 2012
Lead inspector	David Shepherd

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	255
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Corbett
Headteacher	Martyn Bidgood
Date of previous school inspection	26 March 2009
School address	Blackwood Avenue Wednesfield Wolverhampton WV11 1EB
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

David Shepherd

Additional inspector

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Additional inspector

Linda Rowley

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 24 lessons led by eight different teachers for a total of 12 hours. Meetings were held with the senior staff, five groups of pupils and two members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at safeguarding documentation and the school's analysis of its data on pupils' achievement. Questionnaires from 51 parents and carers, 12 staff and 62 pupils were received and analysed.

Information about the school

This school is an average-sized primary school. The very large majority of pupils are White British, with very few from an Indian heritage, of whom few speak English as an additional language. An above-average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average. A few pupils have behavioural difficulties. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of one Reception class and two Nursery classes. The school meets the government's current floor standard, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has carried out a restructuring of its staffing during the past 12 months with five subject leaders taking on different responsibilities. It has gained Healthy School status and the Activemark award.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Relationships between adults and pupils are good, and pupils get on well together. The school is not good because progress overall, and particularly in mathematics, is no more than satisfactory, and leaders and managers are not ensuring that the quality of teaching is consistently good or better.
- Achievement is satisfactory. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is broadly average. Progress is quicker in reading and writing than in mathematics, and is satisfactory overall. Progress in mathematics is not good because some pupils do not know their multiplication tables well, so are slow to solve mathematical problems for themselves.
- Teaching varies too much in quality. Much is good and fully engages and motivates pupils to learn. In these lessons, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are high. However, some teaching does not challenge pupils at different levels of ability well enough and they do not always know what to do next to improve, and this makes teaching satisfactory and not good.
- Behaviour and safety are satisfactory. Parents, carers, pupils and staff are positive about behaviour, although a few concerns were raised that behaviour is not always good and that some bullying occurs. Inspectors found that procedures for dealing with behaviour and bullying are rigorous and that pupils' behaviour contributes to a safe and orderly environment.
- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching are carried out accurately and school performance is managed satisfactorily. The headteacher, effectively supported by the deputy headteacher, has successfully brought about sustained improvements since the previous inspection in spite of many subject leaders being new to their roles. The school development plan and subject action plans identify priorities correctly, but give limited detail on the measurable impact that should result.
- 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?

- By September 2012, raise achievement in mathematics by ensuring pupils have a good grasp of their multiplication tables to enable them to solve mathematical problems accurately.

- By December 2012, improve the quality of teaching to good or better by ensuring that all teachers consistently:
 - explain clearly to pupils of different levels of ability what they are to learn in lessons, and provide learning activities that are well matched to these levels
 - correct any pupils' misunderstandings made during lessons when they are working independently
 - indicate the next steps in pupils' learning to them in marking and provide them with opportunities to act on the guidance given.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - extending the training of subject leaders in the techniques of monitoring and evaluation
 - devising and implementing plans that give enough detail about strategies to be used and lead to improvements in clearly defined measurable outcomes for pupils.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, most children have made satisfactory progress and reach broadly average standards in all areas of learning. Progress is quickest in the development of children's language skills, and there has been a sharp rise in acquisition of these skills since the previous inspection. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress throughout Key Stage 1, although attainment has risen in reading, writing and mathematics since the previous inspection, when standards were much lower. Progress continues to be satisfactory throughout Key Stage 2, although progress in writing by pupils in Year 6 has accelerated this past year. Attainment varies each year depending on the cohort but, by the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is broadly average as evidenced by test results and school data, as well as by standards seen by inspectors in lessons and pupils' books. Over the past three years, pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals have made similar progress to that achieved by other pupils. Boys achieve satisfactorily. In some years, girls' progress has lagged behind that of girls nationally, but the gap is narrowing, especially in reading and writing.

The majority of pupils read confidently for their ages. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' attainment in reading is broadly average. Most pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2, have a secure understanding of how to sound out and sub-divide unfamiliar words. In discussions, pupils reported that the school helps them develop their reading well, although they say they do get stuck sometimes on new words. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall, although some of these pupils struggle with reading in Key Stage 2. The few who speak English as an additional language generally achieve at similar levels to their peers in reading and access the full curriculum confidently. Their writing and mathematics are, generally, in line with the skills of other pupils.

Most parents and carers are positive about how well the school develops their

children's skills in reading, writing and mathematics, but inspectors could not fully endorse their views. Progress slows when work is not pitched at the right level. Some Year 5 and 6 higher-ability pupils did not make rapid progress in mathematics as they were drawing reflected shapes with coordinates that were not challenging enough for them. Some lower-ability pupils found the same task too hard, slowing their progress. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils working with their teacher made good progress in doubling numbers, but those working independently struggled to learn because they did not know their two times table well enough to double single-digit numbers.

There are several examples of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable making good progress. Their needs are identified accurately and appropriate additional support is allocated to meet their needs effectively.

Quality of teaching

Evidence from pupils' questionnaires and discussions with pupils indicate that most regard teaching as good. Parents and carers are equally positive about the quality of teaching. Inspectors found evidence of good teaching, but this was not consistent in all classes. Although teachers' planning indicates the main focus of learning, it does not always show what pupils of different levels of ability are expected to learn, nor are activities always pitched with the correct level of challenge; this slows progress, particularly of high-ability and low-ability pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together but, on occasions, not enough support is given to pupils working independently and their mistakes are sometimes not corrected quickly enough to enable them to make faster progress. Marking is encouraging but does not consistently provide guidance about how to improve and not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to respond to suggestions made in marking.

In the best lessons, teachers enthuse and motivate pupils in their learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 were extremely keen to respond to their teacher's prompting to think about exciting words that could best be used for the title of their writing. Pupils proudly offered suggestions such as, 'treacherous tornados' and, 'twisting tornados'. This activity engaged their attention and secured their commitment to work hard at their writing. This helped their learning and raised the standard of writing.

The curriculum is planned to enable teaching to develop pupils' basic skills. There are good examples, especially in Years 5 and 6, of teachers consolidating and extending pupils' writing and mathematics skills in science, geography, history and religious education. The teaching of reading is stronger in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. This is because a programme of systematic phonics (the sounds that letters make) is taught to the younger classes and this helps pupils tackle unfamiliar words. Some pupils, especially those who find reading difficult, continue to need help in Key Stage 2 because they do not always have the skills to help them work out new words for themselves. The individual support they receive enables them to continue to enhance their reading skills. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory and not good because pupils are not taught their multiplication tables well enough to enable them to work out complex calculations and solve problems independently.

Teaching promotes satisfactory spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, with some areas of strength. For example, the teaching of values, such as friendship, respect and responsibility, is good and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development well.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Good relationships promote pupils' generally positive attitudes to school. Pupils' books indicate that most adopt positive attitudes to their work, but work is sometimes presented untidily, indicating that attitudes to work are not as positive as they should be. Most pupils respond promptly to their teachers in lessons but, occasionally, pupils lose concentration and become restless because work does not challenge them at the right level. This applies in the Early Years Foundation Stage and throughout the school. Discussions with pupils indicate that they, including those with special educational behavioural needs, are aware of the school's strategies for managing and improving behaviour, and think they are appropriate and carried out fairly by staff. Pupils try hard to conform to them.

In replies to their questionnaire, a very small minority of parents and carers and a small minority of pupils indicated that behaviour is not always good. A few wrote about their concerns that instances of inappropriate behaviour and bullying have occurred in lessons or around school. However, inspectors investigated these concerns and found the school procedures for dealing with behaviour and all forms of bullying, including racism, to be rigorous. In conversations, pupils from different ethnic heritages and social backgrounds say that bullying, including name calling and cyber-bullying, and racism are not issues, and any inappropriate behaviour is dealt with effectively. Pupils' conduct is, typically, at least satisfactory and often better.

Pupils feel safe and this view is confirmed by parents and carers and staff. Pupils have a good understanding of the risks they face and how to keep safe. For example, pupils of different ages told inspectors how they keep safe on roads, rail, in water and with fire. They also have a good understanding of internet safety. They understand the need to keep away from bad behaviour on the streets and in the town centre.

Leadership and management

Leaders at all levels are clearly focused on improvement and incorporate the right areas for development into plans of action. Planning does not always define closely enough the action to be taken to raise achievement, nor define the success criteria needed to evaluate the expected impact on learning. However, monitoring and evaluation of school performance are having a positive impact on achievement and the quality of education provided. Sustained improvements have been effected since the previous inspection in children's improved literacy skills and in the provision of child-initiated and outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage; in rising attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1; and in improved progress in writing by Year 6 pupils during the past 12 months. This improved performance indicates the school has a satisfactory capacity to sustain further

improvement. An extensive programme of professional development of staff is contributing effectively to school improvement, although some senior staff and subject leaders, especially those new to their roles, do not have secure expertise in the techniques of monitoring and evaluation.

The curriculum is planned systematically and includes all subjects, some of which are linked together under a termly topic. Pupils speak enthusiastically about some of their topics, such as 'Rainfall and Rivers' and 'Electricity'. The curriculum is enriched by a range of visits to places of interest and visitors to school. Out-of-school clubs are popular with pupils and support their learning. The range of learning opportunities within and beyond the timetabled day is helpful in supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The residential visit to 'Manor Adventure' for older pupils gives them good opportunities to think about their classmates, challenge themselves and work in teams as they undertake adventurous outdoor activities. This promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

The governing body is keen, enthusiastic and shows high levels of commitment to the school. It provides a satisfactory level of challenge and has supported the school conscientiously during the restructuring of management, when five subject leaders took on different subject responsibilities. Safeguarding procedures comply with statutory requirements. Pupils and their parents and carers indicate that the school provides a secure environment for learning.

The school promotes equality of opportunity for all groups of pupils and tackles discrimination effectively so that all groups achieve satisfactorily. Provision is allocated effectively to pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and there are examples of these pupils making good progress. However, teaching is not always tailored closely enough to pupils' learning needs, slowing their progress and achievement.

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	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



29 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Long Knowle Primary School, Wolverhampton WV11 1EB

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting and talking to you. Thank you to those of you who completed the questionnaire for us. We found your responses very helpful. You go to a satisfactory school where adults work hard to prepare you for the future. The progress you make in lessons is satisfactory. Here are some of the best things we found.

- You enjoy school and get on well with each other.
- You feel safe and work in a calm, colourful and stimulating environment.
- You like your teachers and teaching assistants and try your best to please them.
- You are well mannered and courteous to each other and adults.
- You are enthusiastic about all the different activities provided for you, including visits out of school and extra clubs out of school hours.
- You enjoy reading and talking about books and stories you have read.

We have asked your headteacher, teachers and the governing body to do three things to make your school even better.

- Provide you with more opportunities to practise times tables and work out problems in mathematics.
- Let you know what you are expected to learn in lessons, set you challenging activities, check on the work you are doing when working independently and tell you what you need to do next with time to improve your work.
- Make sure that the plans that the school has to help you learn in different subjects are working well.

All of you can help by continuing to work very hard.

Yours sincerely

David Shepherd
Lead inspector

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