

Long Buckby Infant School

High Street, Long Buckby, Northampton, NN6 7RE

Inspection dates 19 - 20 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Effective leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception children) ensures that teaching is good and children make good progress. Linking letters and sounds (phonics) and developing early writing skills are strengths enabling children to make outstanding progress in literacy.
- A steady upward trend in attainment, started in 2009, is continuing. Consequently, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above average by the end of Year 2.
- Overall, teaching is consistently good across the school. Staff have successfully tackled weaknesses highlighted in the previous inspection. This means that all pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils feel safe because they know staff care about them. Their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development promotes positive attitudes and consideration for others.
- The headteacher has succeeded in motivating staff to work as a team to improve all aspects of the school's work. Staff make regular checks on teaching and pupils' achievement to identify where improvements can be made.
- Governors use their considerable expertise to assist senior staff in the drive for improvement. Their visits mean they know how well the school is doing and contribute to its capacity to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Introductions to lessons and closing remarks at the end are sometimes too long and not always relevant for all pupils. This slows down learning and some pupils do not make enough progress in the lesson.
- Some pupils are not developing their phonic knowledge well enough by the end of Year 1 to help them read tricky or difficult words. This is a current priority for improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed all of the teachers in eight lessons. Three were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with a group of six pupils, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body plus two parent governors, and staff with leadership and management responsibilities.
- A discussion took place with a representative of the local authority to assess the support and advice provided for the school.
- There were 21 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) by the end of the inspection. The inspector took account of these and also sought the views of parents and carers as they arrived at school with their children.
- The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' recent and current progress, planning for school improvement, minutes of governing body meetings and records of checks on teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were scrutinised.
- Building repair work limited outdoor activities for Year 1 pupils.
- Two classes were out all day visiting a discovery centre on the first day of the inspection and three classes did the same trip on the second day of the inspection.

Inspection team

Joe Peacock, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized infant school.
- The school teaches children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in two classes. One has Year 1 pupils as well as Reception age children. There is also a mixed-age class for some Year 1 and 2 pupils.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average and virtually all speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding for children known to be eligible for free school meals, in local authority care, or with a parent in the armed services, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average, and so is the proportion who are supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs.
- Most pupils transfer to the junior school which is a short distance away in the same village.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for its pupils off site.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that introductions at the beginning of lessons and closing remarks at the end are not too long and are relevant to pupils of different abilities in the class.
- Increase the proportion of pupils who attain the right standards in phonics by the end of Year 1 by:
 - ensuring that learning in phonic sessions is more closely matched to the different abilities of pupils
 - quickly identifying any pupils who are falling behind and providing additional support that helps them to catch up with the rest of their peers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the school with skills and understanding below those typical for their age. Some children are very young on entry in September and an increasing number are travelling to the school from a wide area. Early writing skills are especially low for some. Good teaching makes sure that children make good progress. By the time they enter Year 1, most reach average standards in all areas. For many, this represents rapid progress in developing early writing skills.
- In Reception, most pupils make rapid progress in learning letters and their sounds due to the excellent arrangements for the teaching and learning of phonics. Children are taught in relatively small groups with others of similar ability, ensuring that learning is closely matched to individual pupils' ability level.
- Children work well together in Reception on the good range of activities indoors and make good progress because of the effective support teachers, their assistants and volunteer helpers provide. The close links made between indoor and outdoor learning are helping to extend children's knowledge and understanding. All were excited about the challenge of moving water from one container to another and constructing a water course following their visit to the discovery centre.
- In Years 1 and 2, phonics skills are taught to the whole class, making it difficult for teachers to tailor learning to the different abilities of pupils. As a result, progress slows for some pupils. Mostly, pupils have secure strategies for reading and spelling words, such as sounding-out letters or breaking-up longer words. However, some pupils lack the knowledge or skill to do this well enough to help them to read tricky or unfamiliar words. Consequently, these pupils are not ready to pass the test at the end of Year 1.
- Better, more consistently good teaching has resulted in a steady upward trend in standards over the past three years. Most pupils are making good progress and attainment is currently well above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the time pupils transfer to the junior school.
- Pupils build well on the firm foundations established in Reception as they move through the school to attain high standards in reading and writing. Parental support at home for reading is helping all pupils to make good progress by the end of Year 2. Writing skills are developed well in literacy sessions and topic work where pupils often write at length, sometimes using computers.
- The school promotes mathematical skills particularly well with challenging tasks such as using coins to solve money problems in Year 2 and counting 'cakes' made from dough in Reception. The newly introduced catch-up programme of work for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is proving to be highly effective with most of these pupils making outstanding progress in mathematics.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. The expertise of teachers and teaching assistants who work closely with individuals or small groups of pupils make sure that all achieve well. This includes the very few from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Individual help for pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium means most of them make good progress. There is no significant gap between the attainment of pupils known to be eligible

for free school meals and others. This means that these pupils do well compared with similar pupils nationally.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Most match tasks in reading, writing and mathematics closely to the full range of ability levels. There is a good pace to learning in lessons and teaching assistants are particularly helpful, ensuring that pupils concentrate fully and succeed in completing their work.
- In Reception, teachers plan demanding activities such as retelling stories or sequencing events on their visit to the discovery centre. The teaching of phonics in the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent, enabling all to learn letters and their sounds quickly. Staff and volunteer helpers are very caring and attentive, ensuring all children have the support that they need to do well.
- Teachers frequently check and accurately judge pupils' rates of progress. This is much improved since the previous inspection. Most use this information well to plan relevant tasks for pupils of different abilities in literacy and numeracy. Teaching phonics to the whole class in Years 1 and 2 means that learning is not closely enough matched to different pupils' ability levels and this limits their progress, especially for pupils in Year 1.
- On occasions, teachers talk for too long to the whole class and some pupils lose concentration as the introduction is either too hard or too easy for them. Lengthy introductions and ends of sessions that are not relevant for different groups of pupils mean that in some sessions, a few pupils do not make enough progress.
- Marking is thorough and gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work. This has been improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because their individual learning needs are recognised and catered for in teachers' lesson planning. Skilled and conscientious teaching assistants make sure individuals or small groups of pupils are well supported both in the classroom and outside it when pupils work in small groups or individually.
- Pupils often use computers to complete their work, which helps to develop their information and communication technology skills. Pupils have the skill to change fonts when writing long stories to be displayed in classrooms.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are keen to learn and do well and this has a positive impact on their behaviour in lessons. Inattention occasionally happens when teachers do not pitch learning at the right level during over-long introductions or when finishing sessions.
 - All pupils say that they feel safe and enjoy school. 'We do not like school. We love it!' is a widely held view among pupils. This is reflected in pupils' above-average attendance.
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- Parents and carers spoken to during the inspection agree that their children are happy. 'School has a welcoming, village feel' is a commonly held view. Virtually all who responded to Parent View would recommend the school to others.
- Pupils are rarely concerned about bullying. The only examples they could recall were of being pushed on the rare occasion or having leaves thrown at them. All have a good understanding of different types of bullying, such as the use of mobile telephones or computers to send upsetting messages. Pupils are confident that staff will deal with any behaviour issues especially bullying.
- Behaviour is consistently well managed and any cases of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with immediately and effectively by staff. School records clearly show how thoroughly staff deal with any inappropriate behaviour.
- Staff lead by example and this makes a major contribution to the quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Visitors, visits to interesting places such as the discovery centre or local churches and religious events such as the wedding ceremony in different religions gives pupils memorable experiences and a good introduction to other cultures and other faiths.

The leadership and management are good

- The strong, effective leadership and management of the headteacher have established a unified staff team. All share the responsibility for driving forward the programme of improvement that has been agreed collectively.
- Senior staff are fully involved in the process of checking pupils' progress on a regular basis. Any pupils who are falling behind in any subject are identified each half term and supported. Those not achieving well enough in phonics have been identified now, but this has been slower than in other areas. Staff are beginning to introduce changes such as more individual support to bring about improvement in pupils' phonic knowledge.
- Teaching is checked in detail through half-termly lesson observations, helping to make sure that it is effective in promoting learning. Most of the weaknesses highlighted in the previous inspection report have been tackled and eliminated. Just occasionally, learning is not matched closely enough to the different ability levels in class. This mostly happens during the start or end of lessons.
- The leadership and management of provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are good. Parents and carers are routinely involved in regular reviews. Most are pleased with the learning support provided for their children by staff and specialists from a wide range of other agencies, such as educational psychologists.
- Leaders and the governing body make sure that progression through the pay scale is closely linked to teachers' performance. The 'Teachers' Standards' are used effectively to judge the quality of teaching.
- The local authority believes this is a continuously improving school, reassured by the leadership skills of the headteacher and performance of teachers. Periodically, the local authority checks the school's performance to see that it is continuing to improve.

- The school has excellent relationships with parents and carers, many of whom attended the school themselves. Those who responded to Parent View were very positive about their children's experience of school. All agreed that staff are friendly and approachable, they treat every pupil equally and that there is a warm, family atmosphere. Discrimination is not tolerated in any form.

 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a widespread range of expertise to offer. Through their frequent visits, they know how well staff are working and the school's performance compared to that of similar schools nationally. All are keen to see the school continue to improve and insist on being kept fully informed by staff and the headteacher. They are beginning to link their monitoring visits much more closely to the school's identified priorities, giving staff another view on the level of improvement. Each year the performance of the headteacher and all teachers is checked using information about pupils' progress and the standards achieved. Governors are appropriately trained, with most having recently attended training sessions. Financial resources, including pupil premium funding, are well managed and their impact checked. The governing body has a good knowledge of child protection and safeguarding matters and all current national requirements relating to safeguarding are met.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	121843
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	406055

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	125
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cei Davies Linn
Headteacher	Sarah Dugdale
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2011
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