



Longvernal Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109107
LEA Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number 278126
Inspection dates 3 November 2005 to 3 November 2005
Reporting inspector Lorna Brackstone RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Clapton Road
School category	Community		Midsomer Norton
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Radstock BA3 2LP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01761 412777
Number on roll	128	Fax number	01761 419 883
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Jenny Lewis
Date of previous inspection	27 September 1999	Headteacher	

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 3 November 2005 - 3 November 2005	Inspection number 278126
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Longvernal is a small primary school in Midsommer Norton to the south of Bristol and Bath. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. Very few pupils use English as an additional language and none are at an early stage of language acquisition. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is high, and a significant number of pupils have statements of special educational needs. The number of pupils who join or leave the school during the academic year is high. This is because of home circumstances and is an indicator of the significant deprivation of the area the school serves. Many of the children who start in the Reception class do not have the skills or knowledge typical of 4 year-olds. In particular, a significant number of the children have language difficulties and have poorly developed social skills. A new headteacher was appointed to the school in May 2005.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Prior to the arrival of the new headteacher in May 2005, staff, governors and the local education authority were aware that the school was not consistently effective because there were weaknesses in reception and in Years 1 and 2. However, since the appointment of the new headteacher, a Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 leader, and the reconstitution of the governing body, the actions taken to improve the school have been rigorous. They have had a definite impact on the quality and provision of education within reception and in Years 1 and 2. The school is now confident that it provides a satisfactory education throughout the school. Inspection evidence agrees with their judgement and confirms that the school provides satisfactory value for money. Pupils make sound progress and achieve broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. Attainment in mathematics and science is better than standards in English. The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is now satisfactory with sound teaching and an adequately planned curriculum. Whilst standards are still low on entry into Key Stage 2, the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 provision has recently been improved and this is reflected in the progress achieved by the learners in the first term of this academic year. The curriculum in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory and extra-curricular activities enrich the pupils' learning well.

The level of care, guidance and support provided throughout the school is good. Personal development is satisfactory but some pupils take too much time off school. Very few parents are involved in their children's learning. Close links have recently been forged with the on site independent Nursery and after-school care facilities, and their expertise is used well to support the school. The local education authority works closely with the staff and has every confidence in the new management team.

The new headteacher has a clear sense of vision that is shared by senior staff, and the role of the governing body is much improved. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses and, combined with the renewed enthusiasm since the arrival of the new headteacher and her drive to improve standards, it is well placed for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- raise literacy standards throughout the school
- and implement strategies for encouraging regular attendance at school involving parents more in their children's learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children have very low standards in all areas of learning when they start school and a high proportion of them have learning difficulties and disabilities. It is unlikely that the children will meet the expected levels by the start of Year 1 because of their very low starting point. However, by Year 6 the standards reached are broadly average but

better in mathematics and science than English. In relation to pupils' prior attainment, achievement is good.

Up until September 2005 progress in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 had been unsatisfactory because teaching and curriculum were inadequate. This impacted negatively on Year 2 national test results for a number of years. In addition to this, some year groups have high numbers of pupils with learning difficulties. For example, over half of the current Year 3 had significant learning difficulties and this was reflected in the extremely low standards achieved by the school in the 2005 Year 2 tests. However, inspection evidence clearly shows that learners now make adequate progress in these two stages. This is because the senior leadership team, the governors and the local education authority have implemented rigorous support programmes. These have improved provision and started to raise standards. The successful impact of these programmes can be tracked through the children's assessment procedures where good progress has been made since they started the new academic year.

Standards by the end of Year 6 have been improving since 2003 and the upward trend is reflected in the most recent tests of 2005. This is because the quality of teaching in the upper part of the school is consistently good and pupils progress well. The underachievement of boys in some year groups has been identified by the new headteacher and additional teaching assistants have been employed to support them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. They show positive attitudes to their work and try hard to behave as well as the school expects. Many aspects improve as pupils get older. In Years 5 and 6, behaviour, relationships and attitude to work are consistently good. There is strong evidence that these older pupils are really enjoying their education.

All pupils show good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles as a result of good physical education provision and the promotion of healthy eating at play and lunchtimes. Pupils learn satisfactorily how important it is to adopt safe practices in their work and play and in life outside school. They are prepared satisfactorily, by learning basic literacy, numeracy and information communication technology (ICT) skills, for later stages of education and eventually for employment.

Assemblies, classroom routines, school rules and the curriculum help the pupils to make satisfactory progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's attention to pupils' social skills is a particular strength and the pupils show good progress in this area.

Attendance rates remain below an acceptable level. The new headteacher has put into place a range of strategies to improve attendance but parents continue to take their children out of school for holidays, thus disrupting their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when it was judged to be unsatisfactory in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. The good teaching in Key Stage 2 has been maintained since the last inspection. Teachers now plan their work carefully and ensure that the needs of all ages and abilities within each class are met. This is particularly noticeable in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 class where the new teacher has skilfully organised her room to meet the needs of two key stages. Throughout the school, explanations are clear and teachers make suitable use of questions to probe pupils' understanding and challenge their thinking. There are positive relationships in class. Pupils say they feel secure in school and enjoy the lessons. Teachers have effective ways of managing behaviour, which means that pupils concentrate in lessons.

Good use is made of local teaching resources in Bristol and Bath to stimulate the pupils' interest and help them make meaningful links in their learning. The school works hard trying to involve parents in their children's learning. For example, 'drop in' sessions for supporting parents with hearing their children read have been organised. However, the response to this has been disappointing.

Teachers and classroom support staff are well deployed to support learning. Extra reading support is being given to pupils in Years 2 and 3 who have missed out on basic skills teaching when they were in Year 1. Pupils with additional learning difficulties have work well matched to meet their needs. The new headteacher has introduced consistent and rigorous assessment systems for reception children, and in the key subjects of English and mathematics. These systems are shared with the pupils and this helps them to understand what they need to do to improve their work. As a result of these new procedures, pupils are learning more effectively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum provided is satisfactory. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection when the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 curriculum were judged unsatisfactory. Improvements since September 2005 are evident through the high quality curriculum planning. This ensures that the Foundation Stage and Year 1 learners benefit from appropriate learning programmes despite sharing a classroom. The new senior leadership team has been actively involved in reviewing the curriculum for the rest of the school. There are good plans in place to develop it further through a topic work approach to ensure that is better matched to pupils' interests and capabilities.

There is lively extension of pupils' learning opportunities through the planned educational visits. For a school of this size, there is a particularly good range of clubs outside school hours. Pupils enjoy these activities and good numbers attend. These

opportunities develop pupils' interests and raise levels of achievement very successfully, as was seen in the art club during the inspection.

The science, PE and personal, social and health education programmes are used well to reinforce the school's encouragement of safe practice and healthy lifestyles. Sporting activities and musical and dramatic productions are all used well as opportunities for pupils to contribute to the school and the local communities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The arrangements for care, guidance and support of pupils, including procedures for child protection, are good. All staff maintain high levels of care and concern for the well-being of all their pupils. They are particularly vigilant with vulnerable learners and are justifiably quick to notify outside agencies when appropriate.

There is good planning of support for the significant number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. The school works very effectively with outside agencies and makes every effort to involve parents in the work being planned for the pupils. There is early identification of pupils' needs and most pupils successfully meet the targets that help to guide their progress. Guidance through the setting of individual targets is being developed for other pupils. A good start has been made in making pupils clear about specific things that they need to work on in order to improve in both literacy and numeracy. Other guidance, such as teachers' constructive marking of pupils' work, is effective in helping the pupils to appreciate their successes and understand how to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher has a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She understands the urgent need to raise standards in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. Stability and a renewed sense of purpose have been brought to the school. The members of the new senior leadership team feel involved and valued in the decision-making process. They ensure that parents, pupils and governors are informed and consulted. However, feedback from parents is rare.

The capacity of the new leadership and management team for improvement is shown through their enthusiastic and rigorous approach to developing effective strategies to improve standards. The newly reconstituted governing body is well led by a knowledgeable Chair. Since the last inspection, governors have developed a greater understanding of their role. A good example of this is shown by the successful appointment of a headteacher who has high expectations for all pupils.

There is now a continual push to improve all aspects of teaching and learning. Data from test results is now carefully analysed and the information gained is used to provide suitable support for differing groups of pupils. For example, pupils in Years 2 to 6,

who have been identified as having gaps in their knowledge, are now accessing specialist help. There has been a well planned programme for improving the learning environment and attractive areas for small group work have been created. The school improvement plan provides a good basis for further improvement. The system for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching across the school has developed well during the past six months and is now satisfactory. Subject leaders now have a better understanding of their monitoring role and have gathered information to help improve the quality of teaching further and raise standards.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Longvernal Primary School Clapton Road Midsommer Norton Radstock BA3 2LP

3 November 2005

Dear Children

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed watching you learn. We liked talking to you about your work and speaking to your teachers about the things that you do in school.

What we liked most about your school

you like school and particularly enjoy playing outside with your friends

your new headteacher and teachers are very enthusiastic about improving your school. They want to make sure that all of you learn as much as you can

the teaching and learning in the lower part of the school has recently improved

you are looked after well in school and feel comfortable approaching adults when you have a problem or a concern

you receive good levels of encouragement and helpful advice about eating healthily and staying fit by exercising regularly

the student council takes its job very seriously and looks after children who may feel unhappy in the playground.

What we have asked your school to do now

we are worried about the amount of time that some of you take off school, and would ask your parents to think about taking you away during school holidays for breaks. This will help you not to lose so many learning days.

it would help you to progress more quickly if some of your parents were more involved in your learning.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Brackstone and Dr Lee The inspectors