

Longcar Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106611
Local Authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	300476
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2007
Reporting inspector	John Rutherford HMI

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 on roll	
School	386
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr L Corlett
Headteacher	Mr K Armitage
Date of previous school inspection	11 January 2006
School address	Longcar Lane Barnsley South Yorkshire S70 6BB
Telephone number	01226 203387
Fax number	01226 244783

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2007
Inspection number	300476

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school, serving an area of above average social and economic disadvantage. A small number of pupils are from a minority ethnic background or have English as an additional language. An above average proportion of pupils have a statement of special educational need. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also above average. This includes four pupils in a local authority hearing impaired unit, located in the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with Section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school no longer requires significant improvement. This is because the school has improved standards from being exceptionally low at the time of the previous inspection in January 2006 to broadly average overall. In the national tests and assessments of summer 2006, pupils' standards at the end of Key Stage 1 improved considerably and were just above average. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were still exceptionally low, but inspection evidence shows that they have improved since then. In Years 3 and 4 they are broadly average and in Years 5 and 6 they are just below average. In both Years 5 and 6, pupils are on course to reach targets that represent a strong improvement on previous performance.

The rise in standards is the result of improved teaching and learning, which was a recommendation in the previous inspection. It is satisfactory overall, which is how it was judged in 2006, but the unsatisfactory teaching that was reported has been eradicated and there is more that is good or outstanding. More effective methods are being used to improve pupils' progress in lessons, but there are still some inconsistencies in lesson planning and marking that need to be removed. Better use of assessment information is making a very strong contribution to improving standards. Teachers now have a good system for identifying pupils who are not making expected progress and providing good support to help them catch up. An important strand of this successful support comes from well trained teaching assistants. A major improvement since the last inspection is that most pupils now know exactly the level at which they are working and what they need to do to attain a higher level. They talk very knowledgeably about their targets and show good motivation to attain them.

The improved assessment systems show that the progress made by pupils in Years 1 to 4 is in line with what is expected nationally. This builds on the good progress that pupils make in Foundation Stage, especially in the development of language and social skills. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a hearing impairment, make good progress throughout the school.

The driving force for recent improvements comes from an effective team approach to leadership. The headteacher is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and other teachers with responsibilities. They are working very well together in introducing new methods to tackle the weaknesses reported by the previous inspection. They monitor these carefully to ensure that they are having as much positive impact as possible on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. In doing this, they have worked very effectively with the local authority. They are now showing independence in planning future improvements and this gives the school a good capacity to keep on getting better. The governing body, under the leadership of a new chairman, has responded very well to the recommendation in the previous inspection that they improve their role in monitoring the school's performance. They now take the initiative in gathering evidence about the effectiveness of the school from a range of sources and are beginning to use this well to hold the school to account. This is also adding to the school's capacity to maintain its good rate of improvement.

The previous inspection required the school to improve pupils' attendance. As a result of very good work to improve pupils' motivation to maintain good attendance, there has been a substantial increase in the last year and this is no longer a concern. Attendance has also improved because pupils are enjoying their work. They behave well in school and generally have good

attitudes to learning, although in some classes there are still signs of the passivity that was reported in the last inspection. This is especially where pupils have too little opportunity to collaborate with others. Parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire were almost unanimous in expressing their full support for the school and some noted that they have seen much recent improvement. The school now provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and achievement in Years 5 and 6.
- Improve consistency in the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - lesson planning helps all teachers to match work to the different learning needs of pupils
 - all marking informs pupils how they can improve
 - pupils in all classes have the opportunity to improve their learning by working in partnership with others.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are broadly average and pupils' progress is satisfactory overall. Standards are in line with or above the national average between Foundation Stage and Year 4 and they are just below in Years 5 and 6.

Children enter the Foundation Stage with below average levels of attainment. They make good progress, particularly in the development of language skills and in personal and social education. Their attainment rises to the average level in these areas by the time they go into Key Stage 1. Pupils continue to make good progress and their attainment is just above average, overall, by the end of Year 2. They perform particularly well in writing because of the emphasis that teachers give to this, and the standard attained is well above average.

In the 2006 national tests, the performance of Year 6 pupils was exceptionally low. Inspection evidence from school records, pupils' work and lesson observations shows that attainment in Key Stage 2 has improved and is now broadly average to below average. Standards are in line with the national average in Years 3 and 4 and just below in Years 5 and 6. Because of improved methods for identifying those who need additional support, fewer pupils are falling short of their expected level of attainment. This has enabled the school to set targets for Years 5 and 6 to improve significantly on the 2006 performance. These targets, however, still represent lower achievement than there is in the rest of the school; improving the progress of Year 5 and 6 pupils remains a priority.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, helped by very effective support from teaching assistants in classrooms. Pupils in the hearing impaired unit make very good progress because of the high quality of teaching and specialist support. The difference in progress between boys and girls, reported in the previous inspection, is no longer a concern.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school to work and to achieve their targets. Attendance has improved considerably in the past year and is now satisfactory. Pupils are generally keen to learn, except in some lessons where they do not apply themselves fully because there is limited opportunity to interact with the teacher or other

pupils. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Many pupils volunteer to learn sign language so that they can work together with pupils in the hearing impaired unit. In an assembly most pupils responded very sensitively to a song that was signed by a mixed group of pupils from the unit and other classes.

Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of diet and exercise in a healthy lifestyle. They also talk confidently about how the school rules are helping to give them an environment in which they feel safe from the effects of misbehaviour. Many pupils are developing a good sense of responsibility to their community through taking on roles such as school council representatives, playtime 'squaddies' or Foundation Stage helpers. The development of skills that will be useful to them in later life, such as basic literacy and numeracy, teamwork and an understanding of adult occupations, is satisfactory overall.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning were satisfactory in the previous inspection. This is still the case, although more of the teaching is good or better and unsatisfactory teaching has been eradicated. There is still a degree of inconsistency between classes that needs to be removed so that teaching and learning can have an even more positive impact on standards.

Teachers generally expect pupils to work hard and behave well in lessons and many provide lively teaching and interesting activities. Most lessons have a clear objective and pupils know what they need to do to achieve this. In some lessons this approach is very effective when pupils assess their own progress and when teachers end the lesson by checking who has achieved the objective and who needs more challenge or support. The most effective teachers use marking to give pupils useful information on what they still need to do to meet an objective. These good approaches are not yet used consistently enough in all classes. Most teachers use questions effectively to extend pupils' thinking and some are skilful in adapting tasks according to pupils' different ability levels. Some, however, do not plan precisely enough how they will make these adaptations and consequently they have groups of pupils who find their work too easy.

Pupils generally work well on their own initiative and without close direction from their teacher. Not all teachers take full advantage of this by giving these pupils challenging tasks that they can work on in collaboration with others in order to extend their problem-solving and language skills. Pupils are very confident in offering their own ideas in lessons, such as a Year 4 pupil telling the teacher, without being prompted, that a particular word she used was 'onomatopoeic'.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is carefully planned and monitored by the leadership team to ensure that all pupils receive a balanced experience and that statutory requirements are met. There is not yet sufficient planned opportunity to develop literacy and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics; this is recognised as a development priority. A number of programmes are included which make a good contribution to pupils' personal development and well-being. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of visiting specialists and performers, trips to places of interest and fieldwork in the locality. Computer presentations are used skilfully by some teachers to enrich learning. Many pupils enjoy the growing range of

extra-curricular activities, which includes sports, salsa dancing and additional study to boost their progress.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given good support to help them take advantage of the school's curriculum. The inclusion coordinator skilfully plans the programmes for different groups across the school to optimise the use of resources. She organises training for teaching assistants appropriate to the support that they provide and, as a result, this support is very effective. She monitors the impact of additional programmes and this shows that most pupils who receive them make good progress. Pupils with a hearing impairment make good progress because of the high quality of teaching and support they receive and the stimulating environment in which they work. They are included in many aspects of general school life, helped by the fact that other pupils are learning sign language to aid communication. The school makes effective arrangements for newcomers to the school who have English as an additional language, ensuring that they settle in quickly and get the support they need.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support were satisfactory in the previous inspection and they are now good because of the improved academic guidance given to pupils. The recently introduced system for monitoring progress, setting challenging targets and providing additional support where required is helping pupils to achieve higher standards throughout the school. A very effective part of this process is sharing the information with pupils so that they can talk in very precise terms about the level at which they are working and what they need to do to reach a higher level. This is being done in a way that motivates the pupils to strive for the higher levels.

The support for pupils' personal development was a strength in the previous inspection and this is still the case. Arrangements for child protection are good; they are clearly understood by the staff because they have received appropriate training. Because of difficulties posed by the accommodation, the school commissions regular health-and-safety audits from an independent consultant. A good range of programmes for personal education helps pupils to know how to make the right choices in relation to their health and safety.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory, although the school judges them to be good. Recently introduced leadership structures are effective and have started to make a positive difference, but there is still some inconsistency in teaching and achievement which means that, at this stage, the judgement cannot be better than satisfactory. However, the new structures do give the school a good capacity to bring about the necessary improvements in the future.

The sharing of leadership with a number of teachers holding responsibilities has made an important contribution to the school's improvement in the last year. This is extending the strong leadership of the headteacher that was reported in the previous inspection. A new 'change team', led skilfully by the deputy headteacher, is particularly influential in driving forward improvements to teaching and learning. It brings together a good range of expertise from across the school, allowing the team members to plan activities appropriate to all age and ability ranges. They systematically evaluate the impact of their actions and have good evidence that they are raising pupils' achievements. They regularly monitor teaching and learning to

ensure new methods are being implemented effectively and they provide colleagues with useful advice or demonstrations to help them to improve.

The governors have greatly increased their contribution to the school's leadership and capacity to improve since the previous inspection. A new chairman works in good partnership with the headteacher, senior leaders and officers from the local authority to monitor the rate of improvement. He ensures that the governing body receives good information about the school's performance, along with training to enable them to ask helpful questions. The governors are beginning to do this effectively and are in a position to make a much stronger contribution to the school's self-evaluation than they have done in the past.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Longcar Primary School, Barnsley, S07 6BB

Thank you for making me and my colleagues, Bobby Mothersdale and Graham Wilson, so welcome when we came to inspect your school. We thought that you were very polite and helpful to us during our visit and we really appreciated the way you talked to us and showed us your work. This letter is to tell you what our judgements are.

We have decided that your school is doing much better than it was when inspectors visited you last year. Most of you are making much faster progress in your work and you are doing particularly well in your writing. We are very impressed by how hard you are working. You know exactly what your targets are and you enjoy achieving them. You have also made a big improvement in your attendance. Well done. You are achieving more because your headteacher and other leaders in the school are making sure that more of your lessons are good ones. You are helping to make the lessons good by being keen to learn and by working well on your own. Your governors deserve a special mention because they are helping your school a great deal to keep on improving.

While your school is getting better there is still some hard work to be done. We have asked the headteacher and staff to help the older pupils to make even more progress and to make sure that all the lessons are as good as the best ones. We would like you to help by doing more tasks with partners in lessons, which will help you to work out solutions to problems.

Thank you very much for working so hard during the past year and we wish you well for the future.