

# Larchfield Primary and Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109938
<b>Local Authority</b>	Windsor and Maidenhead
<b>Inspection number</b>	310149
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Earish

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	141
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	33
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Mark Eynon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Niki Alvarado
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	31 January 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Bargeman Road Maidenhead SL6 2SG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01628 622522

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 October 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	310149

**Fax number**

01628 622160

<b>Age group</b>	3-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This small primary school serves a culturally diverse area of Maidenhead. About a quarter of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups and a number are at very earliest stages of learning English. Attainment when children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is much lower than that expected for the age group. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is very much higher above that found nationally. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. A privately run nursery occupies separate buildings in the grounds of 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

This rapidly improving school provides a satisfactory standard of education. The school has very clear procedures to monitor its work and to identify the main issues for development. Under the very effective leadership of the headteacher, an enthusiastic senior management team supports and influences the work of their year groups. They work together as a committed and cohesive team to ensure consistency of practice in most areas of the school's work. Standards are rising, even though they are well below average in writing, mathematics and science. Pupils who have difficulty reading and writing and those speaking English as an additional language are making good progress during lessons because of the good support they receive. Teaching and learning are rapidly improving. It is satisfactory now and so almost all pupils make the progress expected of them, so that achievement is satisfactory.

The school has been through a period of great uncertainty and turbulence. On her appointment, just over two years ago, the new headteacher and chair of governors drew up an action plan to deal decisively with disaffection amongst parents and pupils, underachievement, poor behaviour and lack of morale. The effect of this very effective leadership quickly became apparent. The school appointed a new teaching team alongside new senior managers. They successfully rebuilt the confidence and self-esteem of pupils and adults and took effective actions to eradicate underachievement. For example, children in the EYFS are now achieving exceptionally well. This is a significant success and an excellent foundation for future learning and progress.

A group of older pupils confirmed these achievements during an unprompted interview with the inspector. They presented a signed letter explaining how much the school had improved. Pupils were adamant it was due to the new headteacher and that 'it was difficult to believe how much has changed'. They explained that behaviour had improved considerably and that they now feel very safe, happy and valued members of the community, and added, 'We know because it happened before our own eyes...you have got to believe us...we are so pleased.' Parents' responses to the questionnaire confirm this and overwhelmingly support the school.

Evidence from the school's accurate evaluations show the amount of good or better teaching is increasing. This is the result of actions based upon the outcomes of the rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching by the headteacher and senior managers. However, teaching is not yet consistently good across all classes, which results in some uneven progress.

The satisfactory curriculum provides well for pupils' personal, social and health education and makes a positive contribution to their good personal development. Planning in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science has been adapted to meet the needs of the different groups within the classes. However, it does not ensure there are enough opportunities in some lessons for pupils, especially the higher attainers, to work independently and use their initiative in order to sustain rapid progress.

Pupils are well cared for and feel safe. Their personal development is good, and they are knowledgeable about how to stay safe and healthy. There are very good systems to track their performance so that teachers can quickly identify underachievement and deal with it. Pupils are well guided and supported in their learning, so that they know what they must do to improve. A programme to help pupils discuss their emotions and think about behaviour has helped to create the school's calm and orderly atmosphere and the pupils' good behaviour.

Leadership and management is good overall and have secured rapid and sustained improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. The outstanding headteacher leads by example and her teachers support her well. Self-evaluation involves staff at all levels and provides an accurate diagnosis of the school's strengths and weaknesses, reflecting monitoring and analysis that are searching and rigorous. Some less experienced subject leaders are not yet as effective at influencing the quality of learning across the school to ensure greater consistency in pupils' progress.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

The quality of education in the EYFS is outstanding and children achieve exceptionally well against the national expectations by the time they start in Year 1. A key factor underpinning this success is the thoughtful, reflective leadership provided by the coordinator. Children start school with well below average skills, especially in communication, language and literacy and their social and personal development. They make exceptionally good progress because teaching and learning are of outstanding quality. Children genuinely enjoy learning and discovering through play, because adults encourage them to make their own independent choices. Adults are extremely good at building on children's responses to develop and increase their language and communication skills. A very effective system for 'home visits' ensure that all staff gain a clear understanding of the social, personal, emotional and academic needs of the children before they start school.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching to accelerate pupils' progress and further raise standards.
- Ensure that teachers capitalise on opportunities during lessons for pupils, especially the higher attainers, to work independently and use their initiative in order to accelerate the rate of progress.
- Increase the influence of subject coordinators on the quality of teaching and learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Standards are well below average in English, mathematics and science, but achievement is satisfactory. The vast majority of pupils now make the expected progress or better. They meet their challenging targets. This is due to the rigorous approach to tracking pupils' progress, and the work of the subject leaders in monitoring and supporting learning. Children in the EYFS are achieving exceptionally well against the national expectations. This is a significant success. Pupils in Year 1 are building well on this exceptionally good start to their education. Those pupils who are speaking English as an additional language and those who have difficulty with reading and writing are also making good progress during lessons. This is because of the good quality support they receive.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy school, are keen to learn and behave well. They enjoy the opportunities that the school has to offer them and speak about the many sporting clubs and activities organised for them. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. Pupils know about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and staying safe. A very small number of parents had concerns about behaviour. However, the inspector observed good behaviour in classrooms and on the playground. Pupils feel safe at school. They are adamant that adults deal with any bullying quickly and effectively. Attendance is improving because of the school's very rigorous monitoring of attendance and punctuality. The active school council has made several changes including improvements to the school lunches. Their contribution to the community is good. While basic skills are low, pupils work together cooperatively and leave the school as confident well-rounded individuals.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

A significant proportion of good teaching was observed during the inspection. This is the outcome of the rigorous monitoring and evaluation by the headteacher and senior managers. However, good practice is not yet consistent in all classes. Pupils make the most progress when teachers have high expectations of how much they can achieve, and individuals have work well matched to their needs. For example, Year 6 pupils worked at measuring the extension to a rubber band when stretched with weights. They rose to this challenge and found different ways of displaying the results and interpreting the data. Some of the higher attainers went on to make comparisons with a metal spring under tension. However, there are still some lessons where teachers do not always pitch work at suitably challenging levels or spend too much time explaining tasks. As a result, the pupils do not learn as well as they should.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is broad and balanced with an appropriate emphasis on English and mathematics. The school is adapting the curriculum to make it challenging, relevant and exciting by making thematic links between the different areas of learning. Provision for information and communication technology satisfactorily supports learning across the curriculum. Improvements to the planning of literacy and numeracy are helping to raise standards in English and mathematics. However, planning does not always identify sufficient opportunities for pupils to work independently and use their initiative. The good range of extra-curricular activities supports other aspects of pupils' personal development well. The pupils really enjoy these activities and appreciate them.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Very positive relationships across the school, coupled with the high priority placed on treating each child as an individual, ensure that support, care and guidance for all pupils are good. Staff are clear about policies and procedures to ensure pupils health, safety and welfare and these

are carefully implemented. There are very good methods for keeping track of pupils' progress and the information is used very well to set challenging targets for improvement. The use of target setting is developing well to guide pupils' academic development. However, there is scope to improve this support so that pupils have an even clearer understanding of what they must do to improve. The school works well with parents, volunteers and a variety of external agencies to support all children including those most at risk. These pupils play a full and active part in school life.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has very quickly rebuilt the confidence and self-esteem of pupils and adults. Self-evaluation, involving staff at all levels, provides an accurate diagnosis of the school's strengths and weaknesses, reflecting monitoring and analysis that are searching and rigorous. The resulting well-focused actions are bringing about sustained school improvement. Standards and achievement are rising because the school is setting challenging targets and achieving them, although more needs to be done. The next step is for the less experienced subject leaders to become more effective at influencing the quality of learning across the school to ensure greater consistency in pupils' progress. Community cohesion is of satisfactory quality. The school has plans for engaging with the wider community and building on the improved relationships with parents and carers. Governors are rigorously holding the school to account for its performance in order to sustain rapid improvement. This confirms the school's good capacity to improve.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

22 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Larchfield Primary and Nursery School, Maidenhead, SL6 2SG

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when I came to inspect your school. I was impressed with your friendliness and your sensible and helpful attitudes towards each other. You go to a satisfactory and improving school and there are many things that I like about it. Here is a list of some of them.

- Your school is friendly and welcoming. You behave well and get on well with each other.
- The youngest children are making excellent progress...well done!
- You listen carefully to what your teachers have to say and learn a lot in lessons.
- The school council represents your views well and you eagerly help around school.
- There are lots of clubs and activities for you to attend at the end of the school day. These are proving to be popular.
- All of the adults in your school make sure that you are well looked after.

All of the adults in your school want it to be even better. I think there are three things to do next.

- Your teachers need to give you even more opportunities to use your own initiative during lessons and to work independently.
- There are more good lessons now than there used to be and I am asking your teachers to try to improve on this and make all of their lessons good or better. This will help all of you to make good progress.
- I would also like those teachers in charge of subjects to find out more about the different ways they could check how well you are doing. This will help them to make your work even better than it is.

I was pleased to meet a group of older pupils who took it upon themselves to explain to me how much your school had improved. They were very complementary about the changes...and were very pleased with the new classrooms and toilets.

Yours sincerely

John Earish

Lead Inspector