

# Loudwater Combined School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110524
<b>Local Authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	310347
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Raminder Arora

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	181
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Paul Randall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Ann McGinty
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 December 2003
<b>School address</b>	School Way Kingsmead Road High Wycombe HP11 1JJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01494 524 919
<b>Fax number</b>	01494 538 313

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

An average size school that caters for 181 pupils aged 4 to 11 years. Pupils come from a very mixed socio-economic make-up. Attainment on admission varies year on year and is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Most pupils are of White British origin and a minority come from other backgrounds. Two pupils are at an early stage of learning English. A below average proportion is eligible for free school meals. There have been significant staff changes in the last two years.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Loudwater School provides a satisfactory and improving standard of education with some significant strengths. The pastoral care is good for all pupils and impacts positively on their personal development, which is good. Pupils are well behaved and show positive attitudes to school. They take on responsibilities as school councillors and buddies, which contributes to their growing maturity and prepares them well for their move to secondary school. The school is a welcoming place where all pupils are treated equally. Pupils feel safe because they are well looked after. They understand the need for healthy diets and exercise, and enjoy getting healthy lunch box stickers. Parents are pleased with children's progress and voice praise for the fact that their 'children are receiving a rounded education and benefit from many educational experiences'. The school works well with other local schools and organisations.

Standards for 7 year-olds dipped in the 2006 national tests mainly due to the staff changes. The school has been successful in reversing the dip, so that standards in 2007 were broadly average. Standards for 11 year-olds improved in science but dipped in English and mathematics. However, the school's data on progress indicates that although standards could be higher, pupils currently in Year 6 are making much better progress towards the school's challenging targets, and they are on target to reach the expected standards. Good quality support provided to pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities enables them to achieve well. Given that the pupils' attainment on entry is average, this represents satisfactory achievement.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers have good relationships with pupils. Good teaching was seen in lessons where careful planning and effective questioning challenged pupils and moved their learning on at a good pace. Some lessons lacked pace, challenge and fine adjustment to pupils' different needs. Pupils are sometimes given opportunities to assess their own learning, and this helps them to know how to improve. However, this is not evident in all classes. The teachers' marking although encouraging, does not consistently inform pupils of their next steps.

School leaders work well as a team to drive forward improvement. The systems for tracking pupils' progress have improved. Priorities such as the need to improve standards in English and mathematics are correctly identified. Governors are supportive of the school and keen on improving their monitoring role. Staffing is now more stable and the improving system for the monitoring of teaching is starting to positively impact pupils' rate of progress. However, the quality of teaching and learning presently is not good enough to raise standards. There is a lack of rigour in monitoring standards and evaluating performance on a more regular basis. The pace of improvement has picked up more recently and the school is showing a satisfactory capacity for continued improvement. It provides satisfactory value for money.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children enter school with skills, knowledge and understanding, usually expected of four year olds. They are well cared for by the teacher and support staff and participate in a range of interesting activities. At this early stage in the school year, children have settled in well and are confident in both the indoor and outdoor environments. Their behaviour is good, as was evident when they attended a whole-school assembly. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and often good. Staff ensure that the children work and play in a safe environment. There is

an appropriate balance of adult directed activities and those chosen by the children. Good guidance and support from staff ensures that children make steady progress. By the end of the Foundation Stage most children have acquired the skills, knowledge and attitudes expected of five year olds, with a few exceeding expectations. Promoting good personal and social relationships is a strength. Resources of a good range support learning well. For example, the teaching of letter sounds with opportunities to handle and share books, successfully develops children's language skills. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There are plans to develop outdoor learning experiences to enhance the provision further.

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

- Ensure that monitoring and evaluation is rigorous and helps to raise standards in English and mathematics.
- Make all teaching and learning at least good, ensuring increased challenge for all pupils.
- Support all pupils to know how to improve, by encouraging their self- assessment and ensuring consistency in marking.

A small proportion of 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**

Achievement is satisfactory and improving across all year groups. The recent targets set for the pupils has enabled them to become more involved in their learning. Pupils attain average standards at the age of seven and eleven. Past dips particularly in English and mathematics for eleven year olds were due to cohort differences and staff changes. Pupils achieve well in science because it is taught in a practical way with pupils enjoying 'hands on' experiences that interest and motivate them. Measures are being taken to improve standards in English and mathematics, for example, pupils are now taught in ability sets. This is showing significant improvements in their on-going assessments. Teachers are aware of the need to provide more challenge to pupils in order to maximise their progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress and achieve well due to the very effective support they receive.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils have good awareness of their own culture, but the indepth knowledge and understanding of other cultures represented in the modern multi-ethnic society is limited. Pupils are aware of how to be safe and readily talk to staff if they have any concerns. Their good behaviour helps to make the school a safe place. Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is evident in their good attendance. A parent commented, 'children are happy, look forward to school, enjoy lessons and are doing well'. Pupils have a range of opportunities to demonstrate responsibility, for example, leading playground games such as 'huff and puff'. Pupils proudly talk about their school council who are focussed on 'making the school better than it is already'. An example of this is, raising money to improve the school swimming pool which is currently shut. Pupils are adequately prepared for the next stage of their schooling as demonstrated by their satisfactory standards. Pupils' adoption of healthy lifestyles is good as they drink water throughout the school day, eat fruit and participate in a wide range of after school sports.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Most teachers know their pupils well and relationships are good; as a result pupils are well motivated. In most lessons pupils know what they are expected to learn and activities are well matched to their needs. Some active learning through 'talk partners' is evident and teachers' probing questioning successfully promotes pupils' thinking. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils were very enthused by their first hand experience of a recent residential trip, which benefited their learning. Teachers' planning is beginning to highlight improvement areas in English and mathematics in order to raise standards. Teaching assistants were effectively deployed, provide quality support that enables learners to achieve well. In some lessons the tasks are less demanding, teachers' questioning offers limited challenge and the lessons move at a slow pace. Teachers' marking is regular and encouraging, however, it does not consistently inform pupils of their next steps.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad and balanced with a range of relevant and interesting learning opportunities. The use of the new literacy strategy is making a difference because of pupils' active involvement in learning, for example through drama. The curriculum is modified to take account of the needs of those with learning difficulties and those with particular talents. The school is working to make the curriculum more enjoyable through careful links between subjects, for example, learning about healthy living through both science and physical education. Pupils' skills learnt in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT), are suitably applied in other subjects. The recently installed ICT suite is good provision and is helping pupils to develop and improve their computer skills, which prepare them well for the future. A good range of popular clubs adds a further dimension to pupils' learning, for example, drama, sports and cookery clubs. French classes and regular lessons in learning to play the guitar further pupils' enjoyment and creative skills.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The care and welfare of the pupils is central to the school's work. There is a good level of commitment and a real sense of every child being important. Effective systems for safeguarding children are in place and carefully applied to cover health and safety, child protection and all kinds of risk assessments. The school environment is clean and safe. There are good links with outside agencies to support pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties. The well-trained teaching assistants, who are confident in supporting and extending learning, effectively support pupils. Teaching assistants clearly stated that 'Every child does matter at Loudwater'. Members of staff know the circumstances of the pupils well. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored and realistic targets are set in English and mathematics. Most pupils are aware of their targets and are developing skills in evaluating their own work.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The headteacher and the deputy-head are experienced and work well as a team. There is a clear focus on achievement, but also on enjoyment, pupils' personal development and the care they receive. Senior leaders keep a close check on pupils' progress and set challenging targets using the recently improved tracking system. The head teacher has correctly identified the need to improve teaching and learning and is rightly supporting the subject leaders to monitor provision, lead improvement more effectively and develop accountability for standards. The need for a more rigorous approach to monitoring and self-evaluation has been realised. The literacy and mathematics managers are enthusiastic and active in their areas. They monitor teaching and learning, carry out work scrutiny and coach other members of staff.

Governors' contribution to school improvement is satisfactory. Their role as critical friends is not well developed, but is improving. They are aware of the school's main strengths and weaknesses. Their knowledge of the school's work enables them to make informed decisions about how to allocate funds to support improvements. For example, the decision to spend funds on a new ICT suite is helping pupils to enhance their computer skills.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

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

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is 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
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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 the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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

19 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Loudwater Combined School, High Wycombe, HP11 1JJ

On behalf of the inspectors I would like to thank you very much for welcoming us to your school. We really enjoyed meeting you, talking to you and looking at all your work. We think your school is satisfactory and improving.

Here are the things we like best about your school.

- Your school is friendly and welcoming.
- You enjoy coming to school and your attendance is good.
- You also enjoy the good extra-curricular activities your school offers you.
- Your behaviour is good.
- You listen carefully to your teachers and you are willing to work hard.
- You learn to work and play well together and to look after yourselves.
- Everyone at school takes good care of you, so that you are safe and happy, and your parents are very pleased.
- Your teachers are particularly pleased with your progress in science, and they would like you to do equally well in English and mathematics.

Your headteacher, class teachers, and all of the other staff who help run your school, are keen for you to get the best education. We agree with the targets they have set to make your learning even more enjoyable, and we are confident that you will help the school to meet them.

There are three things that we think would make your school even better.

- We have asked the headteacher, governors and all staff to work harder at improving standards in English and mathematics.
- The teachers are going to continue working on providing more challenge in all your lessons and enable you to do your best.
- We have asked your teachers to give you more opportunities in assessing how well you have done and to tell you very clearly what you need to do next, when they mark your work.

Everyone at Loudwater can work together to do these things. We hope that you will continue to enjoy all the things you do, which help you to learn and be happy.

With best wishes

R Arora

Lead Inspector