

Longborough Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115632
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	312006
Inspection date	5 June 2008
Reporting inspector	John Carnaghan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	42
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Arthurs
Headteacher	Karen Lewis
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2004
School address	Longborough Moreton-in-Marsh GL56 0QD
Telephone number	01451 830097
Fax number	01451 830097

Age group	4-11
Inspection date	5 June 2008
Inspection number	312006

© Crown copyright 2008

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 an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Longborough Church of England Primary is a very small school. Almost all pupils are White British and all speak English as their first language. The school recently experienced a long period of instability when it was threatened with closure. Its future is now assured, in federation with another small school. The current acting headteacher has been in post since March 2008 and is due to take over as executive headteacher of the federated schools in September 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Longborough Church of England Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education. After a long period of uncertainty, arrangements for federation mean that it is now poised for a secure future.

This is a friendly village school where pupils are very happy. Their personal development is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy school life, appreciating the benefits of a small school in promoting good relationships across the whole age range. They correctly report behaviour is very good and say bullying is virtually non-existent. They enjoy lessons, especially those that allow them to participate actively. Parents support the school strongly and are happy that its future is now secure. One typical comment described it as having '...committed teaching staff who have that personal touch. My children thrive.' Pupils are well cared for, receiving helpful advice and guidance that support both their personal and academic development. There are good systems to ensure that all pupils are included in school life.

Children start the Foundation Stage with the expected skills. When they leave Year 6 standards are average but, despite recent improvements, those in mathematics lag behind. The achievement of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Classrooms are positive places for learning and relationships are good. For example, Years 5 and 6 pupils evaluated one another's writing rigorously yet sympathetically, identifying and praising strengths like the use of alliteration. Some teaching does not challenge all pupils equally, so the pace of learning can falter. The curriculum is good. The variety of learning experiences available, especially in sport and the arts, is commendable.

The new acting headteacher has had a significant positive impact on morale in her brief time in post. She has ensured good planning for its future in a federation. Supported by governors, staff have emerged from an uncertain period and are determined to make improvements. The governors' monitoring of the school has given them a clear grasp of what needs to be done. The Foundation Stage lacks leadership, which leads to some inconsistencies in its provision.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children start in the Reception class with the expected skills. They quickly develop good learning habits, such as independence, and make appropriate gains in all areas of learning. They are effectively prepared for Year 1, leaving the Foundation Stage with skills that match national expectations. Their achievement is satisfactory. Children's progress is carefully monitored and recorded, and this ensures good coverage of the required areas. While teaching is satisfactory, it is inconsistent and sometimes fails to engage children or provide them with stimulating activities. The Foundation Stage is the responsibility of part-time staff and has no named leader, so planning varies in quality and rigour.

What the school should do to improve further

- Appoint a leader of the Foundation Stage to ensure a more rigorous and consistent approach.
- Improve the consistency of teaching, so that all lessons provide the correct degree of support and challenge for pupils.
- Raise standards in mathematics by improving support available for pupils. 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

Children enter school with standards similar to expectations. They leave Year 6 with average standards, although these vary annually with the small groups involved. Pupils' achievement, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is satisfactory. Rigorous action in the last year, such as providing more individualised support, has improved standards in Key Stage 1. In previous years, attainment declined, but current standards are now average and achievement is satisfactory.

Standards in national assessments at the end of Year 6 have been average for some years. Mathematics standards lagged behind English and science over the period 2004–07. The school has ensured smaller mathematics teaching groups this year and this started to close the gap, although some more progress is needed. Effective support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has ensured that the achievement of all groups of pupils in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils display a good grasp of how to stay fit and healthy. They know the importance of regular exercise and put this into practice, enthusiastically participating in the sporting opportunities offered by the school. They know how to eat well and keep fattening foods to a minimum in their lunchboxes. They are well informed about staying safe. Visitors to the school counsel them about dangers from roads and fire and pupils are also well aware of the potential hazards of the Internet.

Pupils like taking part in local community activities in the village and church and their involvement is good. They participate keenly in the school council and are happy that their views are listened to and, usually, acted upon. Their preparation for the future is satisfactory. They learn about how to handle money through fund raising activities and their development of useful skills, such as literacy and numeracy, is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.

The school makes considerable efforts to encourage attendance, which is average and has been for the last three years. Most pupils attend well, but a small number of pupils who do not attend regularly distort the percentages in this tiny school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching has a number of strengths but is inconsistent and this has held back achievement in the past. Recent improvements, like more targeted support for individuals, have started to raise standards and pupils' learning is satisfactory.

Classrooms are pleasant places to learn and pupils enjoy lessons. Relationships between teachers and pupils are positive and constructive. Pupils behave and concentrate very well. Teachers

have a good grasp of their subject areas and are enthusiastic. Information and communication technology is used to enliven lessons in a number of subjects, addressing concerns raised in the previous inspection. Most lessons are well planned with a variety of interesting, brief activities to maintain interest. However, some lesson plans do not take into account the varied learning needs in the mixed age classes. In consequence, occasionally pupils become bored because the work is either unchallenging or too difficult.

Pupils' work is well presented and regularly marked and assessed. Marking is thorough and helpful and pupils take account of teachers' comments.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Awards from Artsmark and Activemark confirm the strengths of the curriculum. Pupils are enthusiastic about the numerous sporting and artistic opportunities available. All curriculum requirements are met. Useful links with local secondary schools improve opportunities for pupils, for example by providing staff expertise to teach French in Years 3 to 6.

Pupils appreciate the numerous after school clubs and many of them participate. These have a positive impact on their personal development. Their learning experiences are enriched by numerous visitors, some from far away places, and the good opportunities to take part in short and long visits to places of interest.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school works well to maximise the advantages of its small size. All pupils are well known to staff. The parents who responded to the survey were unanimous in their praise of the school's nurturing environment. Pupils know they are in a safe place and are happy that there are numerous adults they can turn to if they should need help or advice. The school's formal procedures to ensure pupils' well-being are robust.

Pupils have targets for improvement in English and mathematics, and know them well. Targets are regularly reviewed and, when achieved, replaced by another and this helps promote pupils' progress. Linked with effective marking, this means they receive good academic support and guidance. This has a positive impact on achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

In her brief time in post, the acting headteacher has provided good leadership and instituted sensible plans for the school's transition to federated status. She has a firm grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and works well to rectify the latter. Her actions have not yet had time to have a significant impact.

Strong links with a local cluster of schools have increased available resources and provided good opportunities in areas like staff training. Close liaison with secondary schools is advantageous; for example, gifted and talented pupils attend workshops on a number of topics.

The number of part-time staff makes delegation of managerial roles difficult. Formal monitoring of the work of the school has been limited in recent months due to leadership changes. There is no Foundation Stage leader and provision in this area has suffered as a result. Accommodation,

particularly outside, is spacious and attractive. The school is aware of the need to improve the outside play area for its youngest children.

The governing body supports the school strongly and has helped 'steady the ship' during the recent uncertainties. Governors' regular monitoring has provided them with a clear understanding of the school and informs their active involvement in future planning; as a result, the capacity for improvement is satisfactory. The school has tackled issues raised in the previous inspection report and progress since then has been satisfactory.

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

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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
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

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	3

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	3
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	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

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?	2
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 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

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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Longborough Church of England School, Longborough, Moreton-in-Marsh, GL56 0QD

Thank you very much for helping me as I inspected your school recently. You told me how happy you are at school and I can see why! Everyone gets on so well together and you are well cared for and this makes your experience at Longborough a happy one. You receive good guidance about growing up and how to do better in your studies.

The school provides a satisfactory education and you make satisfactory progress in your studies. By the time you leave school, your standards are similar to those in other schools across the country. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and you try hard in class and enjoy lessons. The range of topics studied (the curriculum) is good and you have a splendid range of sports and arts activities to take part in.

Many aspects of personal development, such as your understanding of how to stay healthy, are good but it is a little let down by some pupils' attendance so that your development is satisfactory, overall. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Now that the future of the school is settled, your new acting headteacher has good plans for the future and, helped by the governors and teachers, she is getting to grips with the areas that need improvement. Like all schools, some things could be better. There are three areas that I have asked the school to concentrate on:

- The Reception needs someone in charge to improve the way it is run.
- Teaching should be better planned so all ages have the right type of work that is not too easy or too hard. This will improve your learning. If you feel the work you are given is not right, you ought to ask your teacher for assistance.
- The standard of your work in mathematics is not as high as in other subjects and this needs attending to.

Once again, thanks for all your help. It was delightful meeting you.

With all good wishes

John Carnaghan Lead inspector