

Long Buckby Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121843
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	314116
Inspection dates	17–18 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Mike Capper

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	167
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Shardlow
Headteacher	Rose Kinley
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2004
School address	South Close Long Buckby Northampton NN6 7PX
Telephone number	01327 842445
Fax number	01327 842445

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most pupils come from the local village. Their attainment on entry varies from year to year but is generally at least average. There is an average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. Nearly all pupils are of White British background. The headteacher has been in post for 18 months.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that is moving in the right direction under the strong guidance of the relatively new headteacher. Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6 and senior managers are tackling remaining pockets of underachievement with determination and vigour. Consequently, pupils' achievement is now satisfactory, although progress is not even across the school. Teaching is satisfactory, but there are inconsistencies. Teachers have good relationships with pupils, and teaching assistants support them well. Adults successfully manage pupils' behaviour but in some lessons the pace of learning is too slow and teaching does not always engage pupils and inspire them to do their best. Information about how well pupils are doing is not always used accurately to ensure that work builds on their starting points. Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Over the last 18 months, the school has rightly focused on improving pupils' behaviour. This has been successful and behaviour is now good. Pupils are friendly and courteous to visitors and generally play together sensibly at lunchtimes and playtimes. The school enriches the curriculum by providing an interesting range of clubs and visits. These make a good contribution to pupils' social development and give them a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. Sporting provision is especially strong and is greatly enjoyed by pupils. Pupils respond less well in lessons because they are not sufficiently encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. The school is improving because members of staff share the headteacher's commitment to ensuring that all pupils fulfil their potential. They are keen and enthusiastic and work well as a team. In the last year, there have been many helpful initiatives. These have already had a positive effect and have helped to reverse a recent decline in standards. Senior managers have gathered much information about progress from year to year and are setting challenging targets for pupils to achieve. This is helping to give senior managers a clear picture of where pupils have not been doing well enough so that they can be given additional support. Subject leaders are keen to extend their roles but these are still in the early stages of development. They are insufficiently involved in finding out how well things are going in their subjects, making it difficult for them to take a full part in planning for school improvement. Pupils are well cared for, and this helps to ensure that they feel safe and secure. As one pupil said, 'The grown-ups are nice and look after us well.' The school also has good links with parents and outside agencies to safeguard pupils' well-being. Parents are largely supportive of the school, and most are pleased with recent improvements. One parent summed up the views of many by writing that 'The school has a calm and friendly atmosphere and I am very confident in the leadership of the headteacher.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that there is more good teaching by increasing the pace of learning and pupils' involvement in lessons.
- Make sharper use of information about how well pupils are doing to ensure that work consistently builds on their differing starting points.
- Develop the role of subject leaders in checking how well the school is doing. 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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties, make satisfactory progress. Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. The school sets challenging targets for pupils to reach by the end of each year. The school's data show that although progress has improved these targets are not yet being fully met in every year group, especially for some younger pupils in the past. This reflects inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school with the best progress being made in Years 5 and 6. Where progress is slower it is because teachers take insufficient account of the prior learning of pupils, meaning that work does not build well enough on their prior attainment.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The school is a harmonious community where pupils get on well together. As one pupil said, 'It's easy to make friends here.' Pupils participate with enjoyment in practical activities such as music and sport, but when expected to sit and listen, they are less engaged in their learning and do not always take part enthusiastically. Despite this, good rates of attendance show that pupils are happy to come to school. Pupils' moral and social development is good, with cultural and spiritual development being satisfactory. Pupils say that teachers deal with rare incidents of bullying effectively. They have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong and adopt safe practices in and around school. Pupils in Year 6 have a new common room that they use responsibly for indoor games at lunchtime. This is helping them to learn the importance of taking care of things of value. The school has rightly identified that although pupils know about their own cultural heritage, more needs to be done to teach them about the cultural diversity of modern society. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the community. They raise funds for charities and the school council gives them good opportunities to take part in decision making. Pupils are very pleased that teachers take account of their views, for example by buying lockers to keep cloakrooms tidier. The increased use of 'talking partners' in lessons is having a positive effect on pupils' teamwork. Activities such as these, as well as pupils' generally secure basic skills, prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There are good features to teaching across the school. Teachers are well prepared for lessons and make good use of resources such as interactive whiteboards to introduce new skills. Teachers and pupils get on well together and this helps to ensure that pupils feel safe and secure. Pupils with potentially challenging behaviour are managed successfully so that they can take a full part in lessons. Teaching assistants give good support in lessons and work sensitively with pupils with learning difficulties outside the classroom. The school has rightly identified that some aspects of teaching need further improvement in order to improve consistency. There are occasions when work is not matched sufficiently well to the needs of learners. Pupils respond especially well to practical activities, such as playing instruments in music lessons or making

things in art. At other times, activities do not consistently engage all pupils and they do not get fully involved. This slows the pace of learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. The school is beginning to link different subjects so that learning is more purposeful. This is still in the early stages of development and is not fully embedded across the school. At the moment, pupils get few opportunities to improve their computing skills by using them in different subjects, although there are good plans in place to remedy this by improving the use of resources. A carefully planned range of extra-curricular activities and visits, including residential stays in Norfolk and in Stafford, enrich the curriculum. These activities help to bring subjects alive and introduce pupils to new skills such as tag-rugby and abseiling. The recently introduced teaching of music and French by subject specialists enhances pupils' learning. Interesting sporting activities help pupils to stay fit and healthy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Parents are right when they say that their children are looked after well. Pupils like the 'worry box' that they can use to share concerns confidentially. There are good links with outside agencies which help to safeguard pupils' well-being. The recently appointed 'parent support adviser' helps pupils who are finding life difficult to overcome their problems. Good links with the infant and secondary schools help to ensure a smooth start when pupils change schools. Academic support has improved in the last year and is now satisfactory. New procedures for assessing learning are providing a clearer picture of how well pupils are doing, although teachers do not use this information consistently to match work to pupils' needs. The quality of marking is good. Teachers write helpful comments on pupils' work and give them time to reflect on these comments at the start of lessons. Pupils like this because, 'It helps us improve'. Pupils with learning difficulties are identified early and set clear targets for improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The strong leadership of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher is helping the school to move forward. Recent successful initiatives have included the increased use of test information to measure pupils' progress and to set challenging targets. There has been a successful focus on improving pupils' behaviour and school environment that is having a positive effect on pupils' learning. These improvements, along with the rise in pupils' achievement, demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity to improve further. There are satisfactory systems for evaluating school effectiveness which have resulted in an accurate self-evaluation. Consequently, senior managers have a clear picture of what remains to be done. Thorough monitoring of lessons by the headteacher is helping to raise teachers' expectations. Senior managers know that there is more to do to iron out inconsistencies so that pupils are inspired and engaged in all lessons. Subject leaders are enthusiastic but do not yet have a strong enough role in school evaluation. This makes it difficult for them to identify what needs to be done to improve progress further in their subjects. Governance is satisfactory. Governors play a good part in financial planning.

They are beginning to take a more active part in holding the school to account and planning for school development.

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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	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?	3
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	3
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	3

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	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 September 2007 Dear Children Inspection of Long Buckby Junior School, Long Buckby, Northants, NN6 7PX Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for showing us your work. You were polite and friendly and behaved well. At the moment, your school is providing a satisfactory education. This means that we found some good things in the school but also some things that need improving. Some of the things we found out about your school:
 - Satisfactory teaching helps you to make steady progress. By the end of Year 6, you are reaching the same standards as children in most other schools.
 - You are keen to take responsibility but do not always take an active enough part in lessons. It is good to see that Year 6 pupils are taking good care of their new common room.
 - You are taught all the subjects you should be. We are especially pleased that you are able to take part in so many interesting clubs and sports out of lessons. You have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy.
 - All adults in school are caring and they look after you well. We like the way that you know about your targets and use teachers' marking to help you improve.
 - Your headteacher and governors know what needs to be done and they are doing the right things to make the school even better. What we have asked your school to do now:
 - Make lessons more exciting so that you take an active part and learn more quickly.
 - Give teachers who are in charge of subjects opportunities to find out about how well things are going across the school.
 - Make better use of information about your learning to ensure that teachers always pitch work at the right level for you. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn and we wish you all well for the future. We hope you continue to help your teachers by working hard. Best wishes Mr M Capper Lead inspector

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Best wishes

Mr M Capper
Lead inspector