

Long Buckby Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121844
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	314117
Inspection date	17 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Martin James

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	118
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Garratt
Headteacher	Linda Mitchell
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2003
School address	High Street Long Buckby Northampton NN6 7RE
Telephone number	01327 842637
Fax number	01327 843904

Age group	4-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above the national average, whilst the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is broadly average. In recognition of its work, the school has received the Effective Early Learning accreditation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, where pupils achieve well. Pupils really enjoy school and their behaviour and attitudes illustrate this well. They are polite and courteous. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The care and safety of its pupils is a priority of the school. Parents are exceptionally positive about the school, and many commented on how much they valued the commitment and hard work of the staff. One said, for example, 'My child is happy and is learning well, and the staff are pleasant, helpful and approachable'.

When children start in Reception, their knowledge and skills are broadly as expected. During their time in Reception the children achieve well, reaching and sometimes exceeding the goals set for them. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 1 and 2, with the result that standards are above average.

In the classrooms, relationships are a strong feature, teaching assistants are deployed well and teachers make good use of a variety of resources and strategies to make the lessons interesting, such as the use of practical activities in mathematics. Lessons are generally well planned, with careful allowance made for the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Similar allowance is not always made for the needs of more able pupils.

The curriculum contributes well both to pupils' enjoyment of school and their learning. It is interesting and varied and, for example, it helps to make the pupils aware of the need to follow a healthy lifestyle. The school routinely reviews its curriculum, with a current emphasis being placed on the further development of cross-curricular links. Pupils report that they greatly enjoy the good range of visits and musical and sporting activities that the school provides.

The headteacher and other members of staff are a dedicated team committed to doing the best they can for their pupils. Self-evaluation accurately pinpoints where improvement is needed, and this has contributed well to the recent improvements in achievement and standards. The school is aware that assessment data has not always been used effectively in identifying pupils' achievement, and initiatives are being introduced to address this issue. Governors support the school well and they are presently working to further develop their monitoring role. Good use is made of outside bodies, including specialist teachers and special needs advisers, in supporting the work of the school. The improvements that have been made recently, the quality of provision currently being provided and the improvements since the previous inspection show that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle happily into school, and the staff work hard to create a friendly and caring learning environment where they can enjoy themselves and make progress. The adults provide them with an appropriate balance between teacher-led activities and opportunities for them to choose for themselves, and the various resources and the outdoor area are used well. The children behave well, although a very small number sometimes find it difficult to maintain concentration on the tasks they have chosen. As a result of good teaching, the children achieve well, attaining the standards that are expected by the end of the year, and sometimes exceeding them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers consistently provide challenging work for pupils, especially the more able.
- Provide a more rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress, to ensure that they are all achieving as well as they can.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the school with levels broadly similar to those expected, although in some previous years they have been lower than this. They make a good start in Reception and, by the end of the year, they attain the levels expected, with some children exceeding them.

In Year 2, in 2007, standards were broadly average. However, these pupils had been below average when they started school, and so the standards they reached illustrate good progress. Standards in the current Year 2 are above average, and pupils have progressed well from their starting point. Boys and girls achieve equally well. However, more able pupils could achieve better than they do currently. The school makes good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and this is helping them make good progress towards the targets set for them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils behave well, they show great enjoyment in school and they have sensible attitudes to their work. Pupils feel safe in school, and they are confident that staff will help them should any problems arise. Attendance has improved, and is now good. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and the wider community. In school, pupils readily carry out a variety of responsibilities, such as being on the school council or acting as 'playground pals'. The school is very involved in the local community, and pupils take part in a wide variety of events and activities through the year.

Pupils have a clear understanding of how to live healthy lives, and they benefit from the good opportunities provided by the school for exercise and sport. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Their understanding of the multicultural society in which they live is limited. Pupils' personal skills, such as their confidence and independence, are well developed, and they are making good progress in literacy and numeracy. This is preparing them well for their next stage of education, as well as later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good overall planning and close cooperation between teachers and teaching assistants help pupils learn well. Classes are well managed, and teachers have a very good relationship with their pupils. Lessons are lively, with a good mixture of whole-class and group activities, and teachers use a good range of resources to make the lessons interesting. Pupils respond well to these activities, they concentrate well and they work with enthusiasm. Most of all they enjoy their lessons. Consequently, the pupils successfully develop and reinforce their knowledge and skills.

Planning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good, enabling them all to take a full part in lessons and make good progress. In some classes, the more able pupils are given challenging work that stretches them and makes them want to learn even more. Too often, however, additional tasks do not stretch them adequately and the pace of learning for these pupils slows. Marking has improved since the last inspection and, as well as offering praise and encouragement, teachers now always provide pupils with advice on how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Planning enables pupils to study a broad and interesting range of subjects. Subjects are generally taught separately, with some links being developed where appropriate, especially involving the use of information and communication technology. However, the school is currently planning a move towards a more topic-based curriculum, where subjects are more closely integrated in their use and development. Music is a strong feature in the school, and, for example, many pupils are keen to join the choir.

In Reception, the children are provided with a good balance between activities which require them to make choices and more formal tasks. There is a good emphasis throughout the school on developing pupils' personal and social skills, and the curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' safe and healthy lifestyles. The curriculum is successfully enhanced by a good variety of educational outings, visitors and activities using the exciting and varied resources in the school grounds.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Procedures for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their health and safety are good, and they contribute well to pupils' enjoyment of school. Staff are alert to signs that any pupil might be worried or anxious. The very good relationships between adults and pupils help pupils to feel secure and settled. Parents speak highly of the way in which the school cares for their children. Pupils work in a safe environment. Safety checks and risk assessments are carried out regularly. The school site is secure, and pupils are routinely reminded about the need to be careful, such as when handling equipment in physical education. The school actively promotes healthy lifestyles and physical activity.

Guidance and support for pupils in class are good, and they are given the skills to become successful learners. Since the previous inspection, the school has greatly improved the quality of the targets provided for pupils. However, whilst pupils invariably know where to find their targets, either in their books or on the wall, discussions suggest that some pupils have difficulty in fully remembering them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads the school with enthusiasm, expertise and a clear commitment to improvement. She is well supported by other senior staff. There is a strong sense of teamwork, together with a clear desire to make the best possible provision for the pupils and to improve the school still further.

The school has good systems for finding out how well it is doing, including seeking the views of parents. The self-review has accurately identified strengths and areas for development. For example, the work to improve standards in Year 2 has been successful. Assessment data have not always been used fully effectively in tracking pupils' progress, and so the initiative to improve this is well chosen.

The subject coordinators, who have been in these posts for less than a year, demonstrate a clear understanding of their subjects, and they have actively and successfully initiated and supported strategies for making improvements. Governors are regular visitors to the school and they are fully involved in planning and monitoring the budget and school development plan. They are currently working to further develop their role by improving their understanding of pupil performance data.

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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?	2
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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?	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 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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

18 October 2007

Dear Children

Long Buckby Infant School, Long Buckby, NN6 7RE

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed our visit and we liked talking to you. My colleague and I really enjoyed joining you in assembly and listening to your singing. I am writing to tell you what we found out about the school, what we think is good and what we think could be made better. Overall, you are in a good school, where you are doing well with your work. Your school is well run and your headteacher and other staff know what they need to do to make it even better.

These things are some of the strengths of the school.

- Your behaviour and your attitudes to your work are good.
- You really enjoy the good range of activities that the school provides, such as visits and different clubs.
- You know about how important it is to eat healthy food and take exercise.
- The staff know you well and take great care of you.
- Your parents are very pleased with the school.

These are things the school has been asked to improve.

- Make sure that you all get work in lessons that is hard enough for you.
- Keep a closer check on the progress you are making, to ensure that you are all doing as well as you can.

You can help too, by telling your teacher if you think your work is too easy.

We wish you all good luck for the future.

Best wishes,

Martin James Lead inspector

18 October 2007



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