

Loddon Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131192
Local Authority	Wokingham District Council
Inspection number	315747
Inspection dates	22–23 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Rob Crompton

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	447
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Patricia Daniels
Headteacher	Mrs Heather Holt
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Silverdale Road Earley Reading RG6 7LR
Telephone number	0118 9261449
Fax number	0118 9266351

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school opened in September 2006 as the result of the amalgamation of Loddon infant and junior schools. Fifty-eight percent of pupils are from White British backgrounds. About 20% are from families with an Asian heritage. Other pupils are from African, Caribbean or other minority ethnic groups. About 6% of pupils are at an early stage of acquiring English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average.

The Foundation Stage Unit for children aged 3 to 5 opened in September 2006 and plans are in hand for the establishment of a Children's Centre and Neighbourhood Team Base within the same building. Major construction work is underway to complete this and to accommodate Key Stage 1 and 2 classes in one building.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. Staff and governors have worked hard to establish the new school and are coping well with the current building work, which is due to finish in Summer 2008. Several promising strategies have been introduced but some have not had time to bear fruit. Good provision in the Foundation Stage means children progress well and reach above average standards by the end of Reception. Pupils build well on this good start and reach above average standards by the end of Year 2. The rate of progress through Years 3 to 6 is more variable. Although standards are above average, pupils in the middle ability range do not always make the progress they should. Standards in writing are improving but there is potential for more pupils to reach the higher levels.

Teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory. Both are being strengthened by continuing analysis of what is working well and what needs to be improved, including the pace and level of challenge in lessons. Pupils behave well and are generally positive about school. Year 6 pupils are mature and responsible, and are well prepared for later learning. Pupils have a sound understanding of how to keep safe and healthy, and they make a reasonable contribution to the school and wider community. The school successfully promotes their ability to cooperate and work in teams.

Care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory. There are strengths in the way that pupils are cared for as individuals. Those who need extra support benefit from well-planned programmes to meet their needs. A systematic approach to tracking pupils' progress through the school has been introduced recently. This is providing useful information for teachers on how well pupils are doing and enabling them to set targets for the next stage in learning. However, work is not always adapted well enough to meet the range of learning needs in a class and pupils themselves are not always aware of what their targets are or what they need to do to achieve them.

The school is establishing good systems to check on its effectiveness and to identify areas for further development. Some of the work done is beginning to have an impact but much is at an early stage. The school's realistic self-evaluation, together with the expertise and drive within the leadership team, indicate a good capacity to improve. This is demonstrated by the establishment of the thriving Foundation Stage Unit, which is a major achievement. Parents much appreciate this development. They expressed mixed feelings about other changes and there is room for improvement in the way the school explains the rationale and outlines the potential benefits of innovations.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

At the heart of the good achievement in the Foundation Stage is an effective combination of lively teaching, a stimulating curriculum and good management. Through a range of learning experiences based on play, children are encouraged to make choices and develop independence. The committed, enthusiastic staff work effectively to monitor children's progress and target any support where it is needed. Good curricular links are made with Year 1 to ensure pupils transfer smoothly. As one parent said, 'The staff are excellent and care about the children. They are approachable and make time for you'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate achievement through Years 3 to 6, especially in writing.
- Ensure that pupils in the middle ability range are sufficiently challenged.
- Improve feedback to pupils so they are aware of the next steps in their learning.
- Develop a stronger partnership with parents so they are more aware of the reasoning behind new strategies.

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

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, reaching above average standards. The school's tracking shows that many Yr 5 and 6 pupils had not made the expected progress when in Years 3 and 4 and have some catching up to do. However, they are now working hard. Pupils currently in Years 3 and 4 are building well on their previous attainment. The standards reached by the end of Year 6 are above average, although pupils in the middle ability range are not making the headway they should, particularly in writing. More able pupils and those with learning difficulties make satisfactory and often good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory overall. Pupils are friendly and courteous. They enjoy school to a reasonable extent, although tend to talk about the social aspects rather than the things they are doing in lessons. Discussions with pupils indicated that their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. They had little to say about what inspired or moved them and they had no opportunities to do so in the assemblies observed. Pupils have a sound awareness of the importance of how to keep safe and the importance of a healthy lifestyle, although arrangements for educating pupils in staying safe and healthy are not yet formalised. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is generally good, and attendance is above average. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and helping others but they are not given as many opportunities as they could be. Pupils' good basic skills, coupled with their willingness to co-operate and work in teams, provide a good base for their future learning and economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers have established good relationships with pupils and the atmosphere in classrooms is calm and purposeful. Pupils generally try hard and are keen to do well. In some lessons, a brisk pace is established which means pupils make good progress in the time available. In others, too much time is spent on introducing ideas and explaining what pupils have to do, which leaves too little time for independent work. This is evident in some English lessons, where, although the main aim is to develop pupils' writing skills, they complete very little written work. Pupils

respond well to practical tasks, such as investigations in science. Teachers routinely set tasks at various levels to match the needs of different groups. This is generally effective but there is sometimes not enough challenge in the work set for pupils in the middle ability band.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is in the course of being developed and the impact of the new thematic approach is not yet wholly evident. Increasing opportunities for pupils to exercise choice and develop ideas are enhancing their personal development. For example, Year 3 pupils, when collaborating to devise a dance performance, were learning skills of creativity, leadership and teamwork. The school has been awarded the 'Active Mark' acknowledging its good provision for physical education. A range of visits and visitors help to enrich learning. Planning is in progress to help develop literacy, numeracy and computer skills across the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Robust risk assessment and child protection procedures have been established. A wide range of support procedures is provided for pupils with learning difficulties and those with emotional needs. Vulnerable pupils are quickly identified and their progress carefully monitored. Good use is made of outside agencies to supplement the school's expertise, so that pupils get the best available support. Feedback to pupils through marking is inconsistent. Some teachers, particularly in the older classes, include specific comments about how pupils can improve their work. Other pupils receive only cursory ticks and comments about the efforts they have made. The home/school reading records provide a useful conduit between parents and teachers. Some parents, however, are confused about their role in supporting their children and how this relates to the 'guided reading' pupils do in school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has a strongly defined vision for developing the school. She is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher. The good quality of the Foundation Stage provision and improved standards in Year 2 are early signs that the hard work of the leadership team is having a positive impact. Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development and how to move the school forward. Governors have a good system for finding out what is happening in school, but are not sufficiently involved in the school self-evaluation process. The school evaluates its performance effectively and the assessment made by subject leaders of work in their areas supports the process well, but the use of data to track pupils' progress is at an early stage of development. Parents appreciate the opportunities for informal contact with class teachers, but many feel that the headteacher and senior managers are not always sufficiently accessible or responsive to their concerns.

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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
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	2

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	2
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

31 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Loddon Primary School, Reading, RG6 7LR

Thank you for making us welcome during our visit. The atmosphere in school is friendly and we saw that you behave well in and around school. We know that you are looking forward to the building work being finished and to having more space in which to play. We found that everyone has worked hard to set up the new school. The Foundation Stage Unit is already working well. Other good things are in the pipeline so you have much to look forward to. Overall, we found the school to be satisfactory.

We saw that you work hard in lessons, especially when there are practical things to do. We enjoyed reading your 'creative curriculum' booklets. It is clear that the adults look after you well. You play a part yourselves in helping the school to run smoothly, and you could suggest more ways to help. Standards are generally above average but we are sure that some of you could make better progress and reach even higher levels. We have suggested that teachers ensure that everyone is challenged by the tasks they set, as we think some of you could cope with harder work. The main area to improve is writing and it is important to keep trying your best. Try to remember the strategies you have learned for writing for different purposes, such as a persuasive letter or a set of instructions. We noticed that teachers sometimes point out exactly what you need to do to improve and we have suggested that they do this regularly.

Everyone is keen for you to keep on working hard and improving. The headteacher and other senior staff have had much to do in establishing the new school. Many parents would like more time to discuss things with them and we think this is a good idea.

You can help the school improve further by continuing to try your best.

We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Crompton

Lead Inspector