

Loddon Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121192
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	339892
Inspection dates	23–24 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Julie Winyard HMI

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	174
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Beth Waghorn
Headteacher	John Robson (Partnership Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector. They visited 20 lessons, observing seven teachers, and held meetings with parents, groups of pupils, governors and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, assessment information about pupils' progress, the school improvement plan, a range of school policies, teachers' planning and documentation relating to safeguarding. They also scrutinised questionnaire responses from 52 parents and carers, six members of staff and 100 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how rapidly the school identifies individuals and groups of pupils who are underachieving
- the quality of teaching and assessment across the school and the impact of this on learning for all groups of pupils
- the impact of leaders and managers at all levels on raising achievement and continuing the drive for improvement in the light of the extraordinary turbulence the school has suffered over the last few years.

Information about the school

Loddon Junior School is slightly smaller than other schools of its type. It has very few children from minority ethnic groups and none who speaks English as an additional language. There are fewer pupils eligible for free school meals than is found nationally. A higher than average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs. Since the last inspection, the school has experienced an extraordinary level of turbulence. Most of the teachers and governors have changed and the school has had a number of different headteachers. The current partnership headteacher, who is also headteacher of Hobart High School, has been in post since September 2009.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Loddon Junior School is a good school and has made good improvement since the last inspection. This is a huge achievement based upon the school's recent history and due to a very recent period of stable leadership. A headteacher placed in the school by the local authority began the process of improvement 18 months ago. Under her leadership, Year 6 pupils attained above average standards in 2009 and made good progress from their starting points. Prior to this, there were two years of declining pupil achievement with attainment hovering around national expectations and progress inadequate. Following the appointment of the partnership headteacher, the school has made extremely rapid progress in addressing all of its weaknesses. His outstanding leadership has energised and raised the morale of the whole school community. Parents say there is now 'inspirational teaching and absolutely fantastic pastoral care.' Pupils know exactly what is expected of them and say behaviour has improved and there is no bullying. Staff feel they are working together as a team and governors say, 'Everything is focused on improving the children's education and their attainment and progress.' Inspectors agree with this evaluation because lesson observations show that most teaching is good or outstanding, that pupils make good progress in lessons and overall attainment is above average. Whilst improvements in teaching have been appropriately supported by local authority programmes, staff have not yet developed a whole school understanding of how their pupils learn or shared the good practice that they have developed. The good marking and feedback policy is not used consistently by all staff.

Pupils' behaviour is good and sometimes outstanding in lessons, around the school and at break and lunchtimes. The curriculum is good and, because of this and the good teaching, pupils are keen to come to school and attendance is above average. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in information and communication technology. The care, guidance and support pupils receive are good and very ably supported by the school's pastoral support worker. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to lead healthy lives. All safeguarding processes are robust and fully in place. The headteacher has been instrumental in building the good leadership and middle management teams. The governors provide good support and appropriate challenge to the school. Self-evaluation is good although, due to its recent history, the school has been understandably modest in its judgements. Because of the current stability in leadership and management and rapid improvements made in all aspects of its work, the school has a good capacity to consolidate current developments and make the further improvements needed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Consolidate the very rapid improvements the school has made over the last 18 months by:
 - ensuring that effective practice at all levels is shared and that there is a whole school understanding of what good learning looks like
 - establishing consistency in written marking and feedback
 - giving pupils more opportunities to develop their information and communication technology skills across the curriculum.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils' enjoyment of school and their good relationships with all staff clearly contribute to their good behaviour and the good progress they make in lessons. Where learning is most effective, pupils speak knowledgeably about the level they are working at. They know exactly what they need to do to reach their learning targets and say these have just the right amount of challenge. They are committed to doing their best; for example they can explain, with considerable pride in their achievement, how much progress they have made since the start of the year. They say that teachers 'show us how to learn.' Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress because of the carefully tailored support they receive; for example, the well-structured group activities in mathematics. The school's robust tracking system indicates that most pupils are on track to attain their appropriately challenging targets resulting in above average standards again for Year 6 in 2010. This combined with their ability to work collaboratively and the close partnership with the high school, mean that pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Pupils say they feel safe at school and that any incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively. They are confident that they can talk to adults if they have any problems. Most pupils adopt healthy, physically active lifestyles and speak with enthusiasm and commitment about the healthy choices they make. Parents and carers say that pupils are very keen to guide them regarding what makes a nutritious packed lunch. Over two thirds of the pupils take part in sports, music and other activities in break times. Pupils show that they value their school community by volunteering to help others; for example, through being trained to be play activity leaders or playground behaviour buddies. The spiritual, social and moral aspects of pupils' development are good and evident in their enthusiasm for and ability to reflect on their learning and behaviour. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good and it is sometimes outstanding. This is having a good impact on pupils' rate of progress which has accelerated considerably due to the current stability in the school staff and the effective organisation of learning. In the best lessons, pupils know exactly what they are learning about and what level they are achieving. Assessment was used exceptionally well, for example, in a mathematics lesson where all abilities were suitably challenged and enabled to achieve their best. Other outstanding features include:

- opportunities to talk to a partner in order to check or deepen understanding of a new topic, which ensures all pupils are included
- sharing excellent learning throughout the lesson, for example, in an English lesson where the teacher read out the most effective descriptions
- the use of drama to bring stories to life and keep pupils active in lessons
- effective deployment of well-trained teaching assistants whose excellent questioning helps to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding.

The school has recognised that it is time to make sure this good practice is shared and to establish how pupils at Loddon learn best. Senior leaders also recognise that pupils need further written guidance about how to improve their work and time in lessons to action this.

The curriculum is good because the school has developed its own creative approach that meets all National Curriculum requirements, whilst including pupils' interests and enthusiasms. However, pupils are not yet given sufficient opportunities to use their skills in information and communication technology as much as they could in their lessons.

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The partnership with Hobart High School adds considerable enrichment, with specialist mathematics and science lessons. For example, a forensic day was organised to explore simple chemistry; pupils said they loved being 'crime scene investigators' for a day. The school has secured good resources for music and there is high take-up of learning to play musical instruments. All aspects of pupils' learning, behaviour and development benefit from the strong pastoral support provided by staff at all levels. The 'pastoral support worker' gives excellent support to pupils and their families and liaises closely with similar colleagues at the infant and high schools. This ensures effective pupil transfer into and out of the junior school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The partnership headteacher has had a huge impact on the quality of leadership and management because he has developed a good team of senior leaders and middle managers who share his ambition for the school. They are committed to making the school an excellent learning environment where pupils thrive and achieve the highest possible standards. The deputy headteacher works very effectively with him to this end. The school has good governance because the governors know its strengths and the areas still to be improved. They have had to make some very difficult decisions in order to stabilise the budget, which is now secure. Pupils are benefiting from the way learning is organised in ability sets for mathematics in the mornings. This is one of the outcomes of the effective management of teaching, learning and resources that is helping to raise standards and which has ensured that the school now offers good value for money.

Safeguarding procedures and policies fully meet requirements. The school has developed very effective partnerships with a wide range of agencies and gives good support to those pupils whose circumstances make them most vulnerable. The school's good monitoring systems ensure that all pupils have every opportunity to learn and develop. The school promotes equal opportunities well. The development of community cohesion overall is satisfactory. Whilst this is good within the school and local community, the pupils do not yet have sufficient opportunities to experience more diverse communities both within the United Kingdom and beyond. The school has identified this need and plans are in place to meet this.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire and who attended a meeting with HMI agree that Loddon Junior School is a good school. They acknowledge that it has been through very difficult times and that there has been rapid change for the better over the last 18 months. A few parents and carers expressed concerns about behaviour and about the lack of progress their children are making. Inspection findings show that almost all pupils make good progress and that behaviour is good and sometimes outstanding.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Loddon Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 52 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 174 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	13	25	37	70	3	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	30	34	64	1	2	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	25	27	51	9	17	3	6
My child is making enough progress at this school	8	15	31	58	8	15	5	9
The teaching is good at this school	13	25	31	58	8	15	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	17	32	60	8	15	4	8
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	28	36	68	1	2	1	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	14	26	31	58	3	6	2	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	21	30	57	7	13	4	8
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	15	22	42	14	26	4	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	17	27	51	8	15	3	6
The school is led and managed effectively	15	28	28	53	7	13	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	10	19	32	60	8	15	3	6

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



24 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Loddon Junior School, Loddon NR14 6JX

Thank you very much for making my colleagues and I feel so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed observing your lessons and talking to different groups of you. You go to a good school and it was very good to hear how much better your school is now. We agree that your headteacher is doing an excellent job. We were very impressed with how hard you work in your lessons and how keen you are to achieve your learning targets. We were pleased to see how good your behaviour is and to hear how much this has improved especially thanks to anger management support and the Friday group. You have good teachers who make learning interesting and fun for you. For example, I was very interested to read some of your own versions of Greek myths and to share in a reading of *Midsummer Night's Dream*. We were also pleased to see how active you are: joining in well with after-school sports activities and what excellent healthy food choices you make at lunchtimes.

We have asked the school to make a few improvements which will make it even better for you and build on the very rapid improvements the school has made over the last 18 months.

- make sure that teachers share their good ideas and that everyone in the school, including you, understands what good learning looks like
- make sure all teachers write useful comments in your books giving you time to think about what they have said and then improve your work
- give you more opportunities to develop your information and communication technology skills across the curriculum.

Yours sincerely

Julie Winyard

Her Majesty's Inspector

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