

Long Ridings Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	114902
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	311748
Inspection dates	5–6 February 2008
Reporting inspector	David Benstock

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	4–11
Number on roll	390
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair	David Johnson
Headteacher	Wayne L Harris
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2003
School address	Long Ridings Avenue Hutton Brentwood CM13 1DU
Telephone number	01277 222488
Fax number	01277 201036

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average. Pupils come from a broad range of social and economic backgrounds. A smaller than average number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and the percentage whose first language is not English is small. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is less than in most schools, although the proportions vary considerably between year groups. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need is average. A significant number of pupils join the school at other than the usual times. The general level of basic skills and knowledge of children on entry to Reception varies but is broadly average. The school has achieved awards for being a Healthy School, developing Basic Skills and demonstrating high quality behaviour.

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. Pupils enjoy being at the school and when asked about its best feature, they say it is the quality of care. The immediate response of one girl was to say that, 'the teachers were so encouraging and helpful whenever I got stuck'.

Pupils achieve and progress well across the school because teaching is good. Standards in mathematics, science and most aspects of English are clearly above average by the end of Year 6, as reflected in the above average results in National Curriculum tests in 2007 and in previous years. Pupils with learning difficulties, and those speaking English as a second language progress well because they receive effective help and support. Standards in art, music and information and communication technology (ICT) are high. However, the quality of handwriting and presentation generally in Key Stage 2 is below expectations.

The good level of care and support is contributing to the pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are respectful to adults and very polite to visitors. They show a great sense of care for each other. They have an excellent appreciation of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and how to keep themselves safe. They show a strong commitment to the school and local community.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan well to meet the range of abilities in the classes and learning support assistants provide invaluable support, especially to the learning of lower attaining pupils. The variety of activities and use of ICT contribute greatly to pupils' enjoyment and learning. Assessment is increasingly used to track pupils' progress and identify where extra help is needed, but is not yet embedded well enough to ensure that pupils are clear about the levels at which they are working, and how to improve or extend their achievement. The good curriculum meets the needs of pupils and they enjoy the many extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities, including visits and special events.

The school is well led and managed. The relatively new headteacher and deputy are highly focused on raising achievement. Recently increased emphasis on analysis of pupils' progress and on curricular initiatives are beginning to show signs of impact. The school's self evaluation has been comprehensive and development plans show exceptional vision and forward thinking that have secured a high level of commitment from staff and overwhelming support from parents. Governors are supportive and require the school to be fully accountable. Partnerships with external agencies, other schools and the community are effective. Many aspects of the teaching and curriculum are showing good improvement, including issues from the last inspection, but there is not yet a great impact on standards. The capacity for further improvement is good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage provides a good start to children's education. They are keen to learn because the curriculum is well planned and teaching is good. Their behaviour is excellent because teachers' expectations are high for them to listen carefully and be considerate to others. Key strengths are the emphasis on settling children happily into school, involving parents in their child's education and the provision of information to help them do this. Children make particularly good progress in developing literacy skills such as letter formation, learning sounds and how to use these to help them write and read. The Foundation Stage is well led. The outdoor area is well resourced and adequately used but there is not enough adult involvement in children's play to encourage, challenge and guide the children in initiating new ideas.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' standards of handwriting and presentation in Key Stage 2, and include more practice in writing in ink.
- Use assessment and information on pupils' progress more rigorously and consistently to help pupils know the levels at which they are working and to promote better learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children reach, and a minority exceeds, the standards expected nationally in the Foundation Stage. They continue to progress well in literacy and mathematics, reaching above average standards by the end of Year 2. Results at the end of Year 6 have remained above average over the past five years overall. However, the percentages of pupils reaching higher than average standards in English, mathematics and science in 2007 were significantly higher than in most schools. The achievement of pupils, a significant number of whom joined the school later than usual, was good from their starting points on entry to the school. Currently, pupils in Key Stage 2 are making good progress, except with their writing. Their handwriting skills and presentation are generally below expectations for their ages.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning, enjoy coming to school and attend well. They contribute to their good progress by trying hard and taking great pride in their own and the achievements of others. Pupils work and play together very harmoniously. Through opportunities such as the team-building residential visit, they learn about the importance of encouraging one another, while growing more self-confident.

In a wide variety of ways, from fund-raising for local and international charities to helping in the smooth day-to-day running of the school, pupils make a full contribution to school life. The school council is effective in helping pupils to understand democratic decision-making and representation but does not have as much independence as it might to make decisions. Pupils are active in laying the

foundations for later life by learning and practising the skills they need. Opportunities to develop enterprise skills are enthusiastically taken.

Aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral and social development are outstanding. Pupils have relevant opportunities to appreciate that life choices are rarely straightforward. They grow in self-awareness, think in moral terms and reflect upon their feelings and actions. Appreciation of the arts is strong, but opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of living in a diverse multicultural society, while satisfactory, are not so well developed.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers use their expertise well to extend and support pupils' learning. Planning is detailed and thorough and interesting activities in lessons challenge pupils. Learning support assistants give effective attention to those pupils with learning difficulties, emotional needs and those developing their ability to speak English as a second language. They make good progress. Good opportunities are created to encourage independent learning and this is an aspect that has improved since the last inspection. The variety of activities, frequent use of computers and interactive whiteboards, and warm relationships all make learning fun. Pupils appreciate excitement in their lessons and opportunities to carry out investigations or see the application of their work in every day life. This is an area of teaching that the school's leaders are keen to see more widely applied. Assessment of pupils' progress is regular but is not used consistently in all classes to promote learning. Few opportunities are provided for pupils to practise writing in ink.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum meets the needs of pupils well and offers a diverse range of experiences. Strong emphasis is placed on developing pupils' personal and social skills, with excellent provision for pupils to develop a healthy lifestyle. There are good arrangements to help pupils' understanding of personal safety using the 'Crucial Crew' programme. While the curriculum is well planned, senior leaders are strengthening approaches to make it more creative, exciting and enjoyable. Provision is good for pupils who find learning difficult but the planned programme for those who are gifted and talented is less well developed.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good quality of care and support for pupils ensures a secure and happy environment in which pupils achieve well. Pupils feel safe and know there are well trained staff to turn to in the event of problems. A pleasing feature is the extent to which pupils support each other, for example, by using the 'friendship bench' in the playground. Safeguarding and child protection arrangements are fully in place but some health and safety checks are not sufficiently frequent. Links with external support agencies are well established. Although assessment data is analysed well to track pupils' progress in the core subjects, and challenging targets are set, the use of the information to guide pupils' understanding of what is expected of them is inconsistent across classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Since he took up post in September 2006, the headteacher has successfully communicated his high expectations to the staff, pupils and governors and instilled in everyone a desire to make the school as good as it can possibly be. His vision for a 'high performing school where pupils with a range of talents and abilities can do their best' has been communicated very effectively. As a result, staff morale is very high and teamwork is strong.

There is a successful programme of self-evaluation. High expectations are evident in the challenging targets that have been set and these are used well to drive improvement. Although it is too soon for the many changes to have had measurable effects, there are some signs that they have begun to raise achievement.

Provision for pupils who find learning difficult is led and managed well. Recent changes to the middle management team mean that some staff are still developing their roles. However, more established members of the team provide very good support for colleagues and knowledgeable leadership. Staffing and other resources are efficiently deployed. The governing body contributes well to school effectiveness, based on thorough knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

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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 effectiveness of boarding provision	
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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 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.

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



7 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Long Ridings Primary School, Brentwood, CM13 1DU

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you, seeing you learn and hearing about what you do.

We think you go to a good school and learn well. We were especially pleased to hear that you find your teachers caring and helpful. We think that your behaviour is excellent and that you have an exceptional awareness of the benefits of leading a healthy life and how to keep yourselves safe. Your teachers set work that is interesting and is right for your abilities. Many of you are keen to take part in activities at lunchtimes and after school, especially in ICT, sports and music. Your school is well led and managed. There are two main things we have asked your headteacher and teachers to do to make your school even better.

- We have asked the teachers to help those of you who are older to improve your handwriting and presentation of your work. You can help by practising writing, using pen rather than pencil and taking more care to be neat.
- We have asked the teachers to use their assessments of your work to help you know better what levels you are on, the levels you should reach, and what to do to improve your own learning.

We hope you carry on enjoying your time at the school and do well in the future.

David Benstock
Lead inspector