

# Longfields Primary and Nursery School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 123008             |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Oxfordshire        |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 340257             |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 25–26 January 2010 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Rodney Braithwaite |

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

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|--|------------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                            |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community                          |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3–11                               |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Boys                               |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 255                                |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                 |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Mr Duncan Sharp                    |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Mr Paul Hill                       |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 1 September 2006                   |
| <b>School address</b>                      | Longfields<br>Bicester<br>OX26 6QL |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01869 252386                       |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01869 324814                       |
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent about two thirds of their time looking at the learning of pupils. They visited 27 lessons and observed 11 different teachers. They held meetings with groups of pupils, governors, staff and the school improvement officer. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to the attainment and assessment of pupils' progress, self-evaluation, school policies and the safeguarding of pupils. They also looked at samples of pupils' work, governing body minutes and the school development plan. They analysed 99 parent questionnaires and other written responses from staff and pupils.

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

- the effectiveness of the school in raising the attainment of boys, especially in mathematics
- the learning and personal development of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the provision made by the school for the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and whether it has improved since the last inspection
- the success or otherwise of the new management structure, and whether it is driving the school to sustainable improvement.

## Information about the school

Longfields is a primary school of average size. It has a Nursery that provides part time education for children. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly below average, with a majority having moderate learning difficulties. A small but growing number of pupils are learning English as an additional language, the majority being of Portuguese origin. The present headteacher took up his post 18 months ago. The school opened a breakfast club at the start of this term. The school has a number of awards including Healthy School and Activemark.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

### Main findings

Longfields is a satisfactory school which has gone through a period of significant change in the last two years. The most important has been the establishment of a more stable management structure led by a clear-sighted and decisive new headteacher. This has led to widespread improvement in a number of areas, and the development of important strengths in the school. These include the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the good behaviour of pupils throughout the school, better assessment procedures, and more effective provision for the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and for the growing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The teaching of writing has also improved significantly. Importantly, the headteacher and governing body, as a result of accurate self-evaluation, have a clear picture of the strengths and areas for development in the school. Additionally, the more effective contribution of other leaders in the school strengthens the judgement that the school now has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

Very good relationships abound in this friendly and welcoming school. Pupils are respectful towards each other, enjoy coming to school, enjoy taking responsibilities, and feel that they are well looked after. As one remarked, 'We are very well treated, and the staff work very hard too!' Safeguarding procedures are rigorous, and parents are very happy with the way their children are looked after. Parents and carers are also highly supportive of the school. One echoed the views of many when commenting, 'We chose Longfields because we had heard good things about the caring ethos, and we have not been disappointed.'

Children make good progress in their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils' progress through Years 1 to 6 is generally satisfactory, and there are clear signs of accelerated progress for some. Attainment in reading and writing has improved as a result of new strategies introduced by the school. Progress in mathematics, especially that of boys, has been patchy for some time and this has been a recent priority for school improvement. There is strong evidence that boys are now making better progress throughout the school and that their attainment is now what it should be for their age. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, although there is more good teaching than in the past. There is some lack of consistency in the extent to which teachers give pupils the opportunities to develop their independent learning skills. Pupils are sometimes not involved often enough in evaluating how they learn best, and in identifying what they should do to improve. The satisfactory curriculum is giving increasing opportunities for creative and practical learning. There are, however, too few planned opportunities for encouraging the spiritual development of pupils. The school itself is a very cohesive

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community, but pupils' understanding of the range of cultural diversity within the United Kingdom and beyond is not well enough developed.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Strengthen recent improvement in teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6 by:
  - giving pupils more opportunities to develop independence in their learning and thinking, and seeking their views on how they learn best
  - giving pupils more opportunities to evaluate their own work, and understand how they can improve.
- Ensure that the developing creative curriculum meets the needs of all pupils by:
  - offering more stimulating opportunities for learning in order to raise outcomes in spiritual development
  - extending further the use of English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum.
- Widen the provision for community cohesion so that:
  - pupils gain a better understanding of the range of communities and cultures in their own country
  - pupils develop a better understanding of cultural diversity by establishing links with communities in other countries.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

The school is focusing effectively on raising the attainment of all pupils. Consequently, after joining Year 1 with skills slightly below average, pupils make steady and increasingly better progress in Years 1 and 2 and their attainment is average in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they reach Year 3. In Years 3 to 6 attainment has varied between average and below average in the last three years. There is evidence that standards here are now average and that pupils' achievement is also improving. Writing and speaking have shown the most improvement, and the recent introduction of new learning strategies in mathematics has led to significantly better attainment, particularly by boys, who had previously been lagging behind. Satisfactory learning is helped by the very positive attitudes of pupils. They show consistent enthusiasm for learning in all classes, their behaviour is good and they focus on their tasks well, as for example when designing and making Greek pottery in Year 6. They try hard to retain interest in learning, even when they sometimes have to listen to teachers for too long. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language make similar progress as a result of improved personal learning programmes.

A large majority of pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe, and understand the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle. They are caring towards each other, and although they report the odd bullying incident, they are confident that staff deal

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with this quickly and fairly. Their obvious enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attendance and punctuality. Pupils readily take on responsibilities and are keen to be involved in the newly constituted school council. They are satisfactorily involved in the wider community, although the school has realised that this can be extended more to give them greater opportunities to develop their own initiatives and responsibilities. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong, and are developing their knowledge of social and environmental issues. They are steadily improving their basic skills and personal qualities in preparation for the next stage of their education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>   | 3        |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress  | 3        |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress                      | 3        |
| <b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Pupils' behaviour</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>   | 2        |
| <b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>  | <b>3</b> |

**How effective is the provision?**

Teaching is satisfactory, although a majority of lessons observed during the inspection were good. The rise in attainment in writing, and improvement in boys' standards in mathematics, point to an improving picture of teaching. It is best when pupils are actively involved in activities that stimulate their enthusiasm and interest, such as a lesson in Year1/2 when pupils excitedly reviewed the story of 'The Billy Goats Gruff'. Teachers are meticulous in teaching basic skills, and constantly reinforce this

<sup>1</sup> 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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knowledge. However, this sometimes takes too long, and pupils have to listen to lengthy instructions. The use of assessment data and the tracking of pupils' progress have improved and are developing well under the leadership of the headteacher, but have still to make a full impact upon the long-term attainment of pupils. Teachers' marking and guidance to pupils is adequate but not specific enough in indicating learning targets. The intervention of teaching assistants contributes effectively to pupils' learning and progress.

The curriculum is suitably matched to the needs of pupils, and is showing increasing development in creative opportunities. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of well supported extra-curricular activities and clubs, visits and visitors. Pupils particularly appreciate their residential learning breaks. Much of this enhances pupils' social and moral development. However, too few opportunities are planned for the development of their spiritual education. Opportunities for developing English, mathematics, and ICT through other areas of the curriculum are planned occasionally, but are not used sufficiently to strengthen basic skills.

Pupils are well supported, guided and cared for by sensitive staff who have a good knowledge of the needs of all pupils. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving with the effective use of individual programmes of support. Provision for child protection and risk assessment is fully in place, and attendance issues are dealt with well. Pupils develop confidence to move on to their next school as a result of good transition arrangements.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The quality of teaching</b>   | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The use of assessment to support learning  | 3        |
| <b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b> | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>   | <b>2</b> |

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Since his appointment the very perceptive headteacher has accurately identified the priorities for school improvement. His good communication and leadership skills have contributed strongly to the positive and enthusiastic response of staff who have developed into an effective team, committed to school improvement. Senior leaders are also giving a clearer guide to the management and monitoring of teaching and learning. Although there have been significant improvements in several aspects of the school, leaders have realised that there is still much to do. A reorganised senior leadership team is showing the potential to move the school on at an increasing pace and is setting increasingly challenging but realistic targets. The team is also much more accurate and reflective in its self-evaluation of both the school's, and its own performance. Governors

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have become far more active in the school, are involved in regular training, and have a better knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement than previously. They are beginning to challenge school leaders in addition to offering strong support. They have also ensured that safeguarding procedures are rigorous and effective.

The school has made satisfactory progress in promoting equalities by tackling the gap in attainment and achievement between girls and boys in mathematics, but recognises that there is more to be done to improve pupils' overall attainment. The school has a good range of partnerships, which are particularly effective in providing support for the most vulnerable pupils and families. There is good engagement between the school and parents and carers, who have shown increasing support and interest in the school in the last two years. The contribution to community cohesion is satisfactorily promoted within the school community and through charity fundraising. However, wider national and global links are more limited, and constrain pupils' understanding of cultural diversity.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

**Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children enter the Nursery with skills that are below, and sometimes well below those expected for their age. They make good progress in all areas of their learning because the learning environment is vibrant, spacious and exceptionally well resourced. Additionally, teaching is consistently good, and children's care, safety and welfare are a high priority. Child-centred activities are well planned, stimulating and exciting. Children are given many opportunities to develop their independence and self-confidence, and they accept these with great enthusiasm. They behave well at all times, work



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cooperatively and are very responsive to the good guidance of their teachers and teaching assistants. The whole area, including the role play space on the mezzanine floor, is a constant hive of activity, and is notable for the many children talking to adults, each other and sometimes themselves about their learning. All activities are carefully matched to children's needs and interests, resulting, for example, in the good development of children's reading, writing and creative skills. Assessment of children's learning takes place continually, with at least one member of the teaching team always monitoring the progress of individual children.

Leadership and management are good. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has developed a strong and effective team, who manage a highly complex learning environment with considerable care and success. Adults work closely with parents and carers, and relationships are very good. Transition arrangements from Reception into Year 1, which is in the next classroom, are good.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>                   | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:   |          |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage                          | 2        |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage                       | 1        |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2        |

**Views of parents and carers**

More than half of parents and carers responded to the questionnaires. The very large majority showed full support for the school. All believed their children are happy, and they also feel that the school is well led, teaching is good and that their children are safe. Typically, one commented, 'The school has a warm and friendly atmosphere which nurtures children's learning because they are driven with vibrance and enthusiasm by the staff team'. Very few parents or carers expressed concerns about the school, and none indicated strong disagreement with any of the 13 statements.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Longfields Primary and Nursery 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 99 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 255 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements  | Strongly Agree |    | Agree |    | Disagree |   | Strongly disagree |    |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|----|
|   | Total          | %  | Total | %  | Total    | % | Total             | %  |
| My child enjoys school  | 67             | 67 | 32    | 0  | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 69 |
| The school keeps my child safe  | 69             | 29 | 29    | 1  | 1        | 0 | 0                 | 43 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress   | 43             | 43 | 51    | 51 | 4        | 4 | 0                 | 0  |
| My child is making enough progress at this school   | 42             | 4  | 50    | 50 | 6        | 6 | 0                 | 0  |
| The teaching is good at this school   | 50             | 50 | 45    | 45 | 3        | 3 | 0                 | 0  |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning  | 40             | 40 | 54    | 54 | 3        | 3 | 0                 | 0  |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle   | 55             | 55 | 35    | 35 | 5        | 5 | 0                 | 0  |
| 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) | 41             | 41 | 50    | 50 | 1        | 1 | 0                 | 0  |
| The school meets my child's particular needs  | 44             | 44 | 47    | 47 | 4        | 4 | 0                 | 0  |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour  | 44             | 44 | 44    | 44 | 6        | 6 | 0                 | 0  |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns   | 40             | 40 | 50    | 50 | 4        | 4 | 0                 | 0  |
| The school is led and managed effectively   | 75             | 75 | 20    | 20 | 2        | 2 | 0                 | 0  |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school   | 69             | 69 | 28    | 28 | 2        | 2 | 0                 | 0  |

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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul> |
| 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.**



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27 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Longfields Primary and Nursery School, Bicester, OX26 6QL

Thank you for making us very welcome when we visited your school recently. We were very impressed with how much you enjoy coming to school, and how you behaved so well in classrooms and in the playgrounds. We think you are very polite to each other and adults, and look after each other well. It is good to hear that you like all the staff so much. We were also pleased to hear that all your parents and carers are as proud of the school as you are.

You go to a satisfactory school, which we think has improved and will continue to do so. We think that the youngest of you are getting a good start in the wonderful classroom which is shared by the Nursery and Reception classes. You have so many things to do and use in your learning! By the time you leave in Year 6 you have the skills we would expect for your age. The team believes that you can do even better in the future, and we have asked the school to help you achieve this by:

- helping you to have a say in your own learning, so that you become more independent and understand how you can improve
- giving you more chances to think about some of the amazing things you see and do
- help you to have a better understanding of the different people who live in this country and the rest of the world

We think that you will help this by telling your teachers more about how you are learning and how well you think you are doing. Thank you once more for being so chatty and cheerful. Good luck.

Yours sincerely

Rod Braithwaite

Lead Inspector

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