

# Langtree School

Woodcote, Reading, RG8 0RA

**Inspection dates** 12–13 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b> <b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- All groups of students achieve well and make good progress from their starting points. Disabled students and those with special educational needs make equally good progress as others.
- The school is taking successful action to reduce the gaps in performance between those who may be disadvantaged compared to other students.
- The quality of teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers show great enthusiasm for their subject; their planning is sharply focused with clear objectives and the lessons themselves capture students' interests with good pace and challenge.
- Students' behaviour is exemplary in class and around the school. Students feel very safe and have a mature understanding of safety and risk.
- The headteacher, senior and subject leaders are dedicated to improving all aspects of the school's work. They are successfully raising the quality of teaching and students' achievement.
- The subjects and qualifications available to students have been chosen thoughtfully in order to ensure that every student can be well prepared for the next stage of their school career.
- There are high expectations of all who work at the school. Systems for checking performance are rigorous and any weaknesses are quickly dealt with. Morale is high and staff are proud of what has been achieved.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are committed to improving standards and provide appropriately high levels of support and challenge.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is not yet high enough and there is a small minority of teaching that requires improvement. Consequently, there are insufficient numbers of students who are making outstanding progress in their lessons and over time.
- In some lessons, low ability students are not challenged enough to learn at a quicker pace; teachers do not always use questions well enough and students are not consistently encouraged to respond to what teachers ask of them when they mark their work.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 25 lessons, including 10 that were observed jointly with a senior leader.
- Inspectors listened to students read and visited classrooms with senior staff to look at how well disabled students and those who have special educational needs were learning. Inspectors also visited lessons with senior staff to look at students' progress in mathematics, English and science, and at learning in a wide range of other subjects.
- Discussions were held with senior and subject leaders, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors and groups of students.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at its self-evaluation and planning documents, and examples of students' work.
- Inspectors took note of the 92 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Parents' and students' responses to the school's own recent surveys, and written comments made by parents while attending parents' evenings, were considered. Inspectors also analysed the responses to inspection questionnaires returned by 49 staff.

## Inspection team

Michael Merchant, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Caroline Pardy

Additional Inspector

Glenn Mayoh

Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- Langtree School converted to become an academy in April 2012. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was previously inspected by Ofsted in March 2009, it was judged to be outstanding.
- The school is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- The very large majority of students are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is low.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium (additional funding from the government for some groups of students, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority) is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- A very small number of students attend Henley College as part of their programmes of study.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' progress and attainment.

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

- Raise students' achievement further through ensuring that more teaching is outstanding by making sure that:
  - all teachers plan work in all lessons that fully challenges all, especially the least able students
  - every student responds to the helpful marking provided by most teachers
  - all teachers use questions in lessons which encourage students to think carefully about their work and to articulate full answers.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the school with attainment that is just below that expected of their age. In recent years the proportion entering Year 7 with reading and writing skills that are below those expected has increased.
- Students' attainment at GCSE is just above average and rising. The school confidently and realistically predicts that over two thirds of students in Year 11 will attain five or more good GCSE passes including English and mathematics in 2013.
- GCSE results in English declined in 2012 and some students made weaker progress in English than in their other subjects. The reasons for this have been identified and quickly addressed so that both attainment and progress have improved sharply. School data show that more than 75% of students in Year 11 are on track to gain grades A\* to C in GCSE English in 2013.
- Detailed information presented by the school provided firm evidence to show that students make good progress in most subjects, including English, mathematics and science. In lessons observed during the inspection, students' achievement was nearly always good, and in some cases, outstanding.
- While students who attained highly at Key Stage 2 usually make rapid progress, less able students often make slower gains in learning because sometimes too little is expected of them.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are identified quickly. Carefully targeted support means that they make good progress in relation to their starting points.
- The school is particularly successful at improving students' literacy skills. This is evident in most subjects, where opportunities are provided to promote students' confidence and skills in speaking, listening and reading. Students' confidence and skills in dealing with numbers are also consistently developed across the school.
- Where the school thinks it appropriate, students are entered early for examinations. There is no evidence that this causes students, particularly more-able students, to attain lower final grades than they would do otherwise.
- A small number of students study courses at a local college of further education. The school keeps close checks on the progress of such students. Most are achieving well and are acquiring the practical and personal skills necessary to gain suitable employment or further training.
- Until recently, there was some difference in the rate of progress made by students supported by the pupil premium and others in Year 11. In 2012 such students known to be entitled to free school meals and those in the care of the local authority attained, on average, two thirds of a grade lower in English and a grade lower in mathematics than did other students.
- School information shows that it now uses its pupil-premium funding very effectively to support eligible students. It has provided individual help and guidance, additional tuition as well as financial support to enable them to participate in out-of-school activities and courses. This support has effectively reduced the attainment gap between these students and others across all years, so that it is much smaller than that seen nationally.
- The school makes effective use of funding received through the Year 7 catch-up programme (extra money from the government to support those students who attained below expected levels in English and mathematics in Year 6). Through extra classes and additional support, such students make good gains in acquiring number, reading and writing skills. As a result, as all students move through the school, they read, write and speak with great confidence.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Nearly all teaching seen was good and some was outstanding, a picture that confirms the school's own view of teaching over time. Teachers expect much of their students and communicate great enthusiasm for their subjects. Students have great respect for, and confidence in, their teachers and this supports students' learning well.
- Students respond well to the high expectations most teachers have of them and make strong contributions to their own and others' learning. They grasp enthusiastically the many opportunities to work in pairs and groups or independently. In the most effective lessons, teachers often stand back and let students get on by themselves, only intervening when necessary, giving the students every chance to find out for themselves. This practice is very effective and students make impressive gains in their learning.
- In an exciting and highly active Year 7 history lesson, all students made exceptional gains in their understanding of the impact of the Tudor dissolution of the monasteries. They eagerly researched the roles of the various members of monastic communities and shared readily with each other, with considerable feeling and empathy, the great trauma that each endured as their old way of life was forcibly changed.
- Teachers check students' progress regularly, providing extra help to those who are in danger of falling behind. This helps all students to make good progress.
- Support for disabled students and those who have special educational needs is consistently good. Their progress is checked regularly and extra help is provided when it is needed. The skills of additional adults are used well to help these students and as a result, they make at least good progress.
- In the most lessons, teachers provide opportunities for students to work independently and think for themselves. Occasionally, lessons lack imagination and challenge, especially for the less able students, who are not always stretched as much they could be.
- Most teachers use questions very well to encourage students to think deeply and debate their work with others. Where teaching falls short of outstanding, questions are not used as well as they could be to probe students and to get them to explain how they came to their answers.
- Most marking is thorough but teachers do not always check to see that students are acting on the advice previously given.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they are exceptionally keen to learn. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the challenge and the excitement of learning.
- The great majority of students have extremely positive attitudes towards learning and respond very well to the highly effective systems the school uses to manage behaviour. Excellent provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes to their consistently impeccable behaviour around the school and in enrichment activities and assemblies. Students are invariably polite, courteous and friendly, offering help and assistance to visitors and other students.
- Students say they feel completely safe in school and if they have a problem, they know they can talk to a member of staff who will sort it out.
- Students have an excellent understanding of the different forms of bullying and say that the use of racist or homophobic language is extremely rare. If it should occur, students are confident that it will be challenged vigorously and dealt with successfully by staff. The school actively encourages all students to express their individuality and appreciate that people are different.

- Students from different cultural and religious backgrounds get on well together and appreciate the harmonious climate created in the academy. The school does not tolerate discrimination of any kind and effectively promotes equality.
- Attendance is broadly average but is improving for all groups of students. Most students come to school regularly and are punctual.
- Strong partnerships with outside agencies, such as education welfare and social services, ensure productive working with families to reduce the number of students who are persistently absent.

## **The leadership and management** are good

- The school is managed well by the headteacher and the senior leadership team. They set high expectations of the school community and are bringing about significant improvements in students' achievement.
- Leaders have an accurate and realistic view of how well the school is performing. Action plans set out clear priorities and underpin the drive for improvement. Strong systems for checking on the performance of students and staff are helping to support continuous improvement.
- Students are given challenging academic targets that have raised their ambitions. Leaders at all levels make good use of information on students' progress to check any slowing down. Checks are followed up swiftly with well-thought-out support that helps students to catch up.
- Teaching is constantly improving because leaders carry out rigorous checks on its quality. This leads to staff training and support that is well matched to the areas that need to improve.
- Systems to manage the performance of staff are rigorous and linked to school priorities and current teaching standards. Staff are gaining confidence in leading staff training and are increasingly sharing what works well with each other in order to improve teaching further.
- The courses and subjects on offer have much improved. More students are able to pursue the subjects included in the English Baccalaureate which meets students' needs well. The number of students taking courses off the school site has reduced and staff maintain a watchful eye on how well these students are getting on.
- Leadership is not yet outstanding because the drive of leaders to ensure excellence has not yet resulted in a high enough proportion of outstanding teaching. Consequently, although students' progress is good too few are making rapid progress across all year groups and subjects.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is effective and robust in holding the headteacher and senior leaders to account for all aspects of the school's performance. Governors are well informed about how well the school is doing. They receive regular and comprehensive information from the headteacher and visit regularly to monitor the school's work. They know where the best teaching is in the school and, as a result, are in a strong position to contribute to school development and improvement planning. Governors have contributed fully to the discussions on how the pupil premium funding should be spent and have kept a careful check on the impact of the extra support and guidance provided for eligible students. They set ambitious performance management targets for the headteacher and hold the headteacher to account for the way in which increases in pay are used to reward teachers. They know how any underperformance is being tackled. Governors meet all their responsibilities very well, including national requirements for safeguarding students. They recognise there is a need for more consistent and regular training to keep their skills up to date.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137976
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	411979
<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	550
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rob Pickering
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rick Holroyd
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not applicable
<b>Telephone number</b>	01491 680514
<b>Fax number</b>	01491 682411
<b>Email address</b>	school@langtreeschool.com

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