

Longwood School & Nursery

Bushey Hall Drive, Bushey, Hertfordshire WD23 2QG

Inspection dates

5–7 December 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and proprietors have not ensured that the arrangements for safeguarding children are effectively implemented.
- Pupils' health and safety has been compromised due to irregular checking of the school's fire safety arrangements.
- Leaders and proprietors have a poor understanding of the independent school standards.
- Roles and responsibilities of proprietors and senior leaders are unclear, including for the early years provision.
- Systems to monitor the school's effectiveness are poor. Strategic improvement planning is weak.
- Leaders do not track pupils' progress well enough.
- The early years provision is inadequate due to ineffective safeguarding.
- Weaknesses in assessment in the early years mean that work is not always best matched to children's needs.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They conduct themselves very well in lessons and around the school. Attendance is extremely high.
- Pupils make good progress and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of fundamental British values. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strongly promoted.
- The curriculum is well considered and enriched through a wide range of clubs and activities.
- Parents are complimentary about the school.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently improve the arrangements for safeguarding by:
 - clarifying roles and responsibilities of senior staff and proprietors in relation to keeping children safe
 - ensuring that all relevant documentation relating to the safeguarding of children is read and understood
 - ensuring that all the necessary vetting checks of staff are routinely carried out
 - ensuring that the single central register is fully compliant with current requirements and regularly checked for its accuracy
 - consistently implementing the safeguarding policy
 - improving the quality of personnel record-keeping
 - making sure that decisive action is taken for pupils who are at risk of harm.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that school improvement planning is fit for purpose, and is informed by effective and accurate monitoring
 - holding key members of staff to account for their work and its impact on school improvement
 - effectively implementing the health and safety and risk assessment policies, particularly with regard to the Fire Safety Order (2005)
 - establishing effective systems to monitor pupils' progress.
- Improve the quality of the early years provision by:
 - rectifying weaknesses in the management of safeguarding
 - clarifying leadership roles
 - using assessment information precisely so that teachers are able to plan well for children's next steps in their learning.
- The school must meet the independent school standards, as set out in the annex of this report.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders' and proprietors' systems for managing the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are not secure. Although the school has a suitable safeguarding policy published on its website, the policy has not been implemented effectively. On arrival at the school, inspectors were not presented with convincing evidence that all the necessary vetting checks of staff employed at the school had been conducted.
- The single central record of vetting checks of staff has not been maintained according to statutory guidelines. Many of the required checks had not been recorded at all prior to this inspection. Leaders and proprietors were supported in rectifying the flaws and ensured that the single central record was compliant before the on-site inspection was concluded.
- Leaders' self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness is overly generous. The quality of the school's strategic improvement plan is poor, and is not informed by the self-evaluation documentation. It is not clear from the school improvement plan who is leading actions and who is monitoring the delivery of these. The plan does not make clear how the impact of actions taken will be checked.
- Systems to monitor, evaluate and review the work of the school are underdeveloped. Leaders typically rely on anecdotal information, rather than information based on firm evidence.
- Roles and responsibilities have not been clearly thought through. For example, too many members of staff contributed towards the arrangements for safeguarding pupils, which had led to the errors identified by inspectors.
- Leaders and proprietors do not demonstrate a thorough understanding of the independent school standards. Compliance with the standards has not been routinely and systematically checked. This is why some of the standards are unmet.
- Leaders, proprietors, staff, pupils and parents understand and share the school's vision. The small size of the school leads to a 'family feel', where pupils are known well as individuals.
- The proprietors work closely with staff. Staff retention is high.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. This is supplemented well through bespoke teaching in French, music and physical education (PE) led by specialists. The curriculum enthuses pupils and motivates them to achieve well.
- Pupils appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities they are offered through early morning catch-up sessions or after-school clubs which include cheerleading, a range of sports and cookery.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. This, and pupils' understanding of fundamental British values, are a key strength of the provision.
- Pupils who met with inspectors displayed an in-depth understanding of different faiths and cultures and of people who have protected characteristics under the Equalities Act (2010). Inspectors observed a meeting of the school council where elected members

discussed suggestions from pupils about how to improve the school. They considered each request without prejudice or bias, and came up with constructive solutions to pupils' requests.

- Parents and staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaires expressed highly positive views about the school.

Governance

- The two proprietors are responsible for fulfilling the role of governance. This role has not been carried out well enough to ensure that the school's leaders are held sufficiently to account or to ensure that all of the independent school standards are met.
- The proprietors rely too much on what they have been told, without checking for themselves. They base their judgements of the school's effectiveness on information given to them by the headteacher, and have no systems in place to check on the accuracy of these judgements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- On arrival at the school, there was much confusion about which members of staff were or were not included on the school's single central register of recruitment checks and which checks had been conducted.
- Poor maintenance of personnel files contributed towards the confusion about who works at the school and in what capacity. This raised questions about the rigour of systems to conduct the necessary pre-employment checks.
- Routine checks on the school's fire alarm system have not been conducted as required by the Fire Safety Order (2005). This potentially compromises pupils' health and safety.
- The school's leaders rectified the flaws identified by the inspection team before inspectors left the school site. However, these shortcomings indicate that procedures for safeguarding pupils have not been sufficiently thorough over a period of time.
- The quality of records relating to some of the school's vulnerable pupils is inconsistent. Inspectors' scrutiny of records presented by leaders suggests that they are not always proactive in chasing up information in order to arrive at a resolution.
- Staff have read and received the government's latest guidance 'Keeping children safe in education (2016)'. They have also received training in the government's 'Prevent' duty, which aims to prevent pupils from being radicalised.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils typically experience good-quality teaching. This secures good progress over time, which is aided by pupils' positive attitudes towards their learning.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They diligently plan for pupils' learning and have high expectations. Teachers make effective use of questioning to test pupils' knowledge and deepen their understanding.

- Teachers know their pupils very well and skilfully plan for different pupils' needs by providing them with appropriate tasks which challenge them. Pupils who might struggle to access the learning are carefully guided, and the most able pupils are provided with extension activities to move them on to the next level.
- In a Year 5 and 6 mathematics lesson where pupils were learning about percentages and fractions, the needs of most-able pupils were met through the provision of an ongoing project making use of information and communications technology. This typically challenging task involved designing a zoo and incorporated the use of scales and ratios. It is a good example of how teachers meet pupils' needs well.
- Pupils access high-quality teaching of specific skills, including from specialist teachers for French and PE, which supports them to achieve well.
- Additional adults are deployed effectively to support pupils who require additional support. These adults liaise well with teachers and help pupils to access their learning effectively.
- Pupils are positive about the teaching they receive. They say that lessons are 'fun' and that they are always able to ask their teacher for help if they need to.
- Although teachers regularly assess pupils' work, as outlined in the school's assessment policy, systems currently in place relate more to attainment than to progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. This is because the ineffective arrangements to safeguard pupils put them at risk. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils have not consistently met statutory requirements, and were only put right before inspectors left the school site.
- Although pupils feel safe, leaders' lack of attention to safety and welfare makes pupils unsafe. Leaders have not been routinely testing the fire alarm on a weekly basis or the emergency lighting each month. Drinking water was only labelled as such once inspectors drew leaders' attention to the requirement to do so.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They wear their uniform smartly, approach their learning with great enthusiasm and support one another well in lessons. They are resilient and inquisitive learners.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Bullying in school is a rare occurrence. Pupils struggled to recollect when the last incident of bullying occurred. However, they are confident that any form of bullying, should it ever occur, will be dealt with quickly and effectively.
- A wide range of responsibilities is offered to pupils in order to develop their confidence and their leadership skills. In addition to the school council, pupils also take responsibility for befriending new arrivals at the school, and pupils in Year 6 act as buddies to children in the early years.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are exemplary role models to one another, and are extremely proud of their school.
- They demonstrate excellent attitudes towards their learning and are highly appreciative of their teachers' efforts. In lessons, pupils are keen to support their peers when they struggle with aspects of their learning.
- Pupils move around the school site sensibly and respect the school site. Colourful displays are maintained in tip-top condition, and there is no litter or graffiti around the school.
- Exclusions are very rare and only occur when the school's leaders have exhausted all of their resources to support any child who does not meet their high expectations.
- Pupils' very high attendance demonstrates the importance they place on their education. They rarely miss a day at school and are punctual to lessons.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils in all year groups, most notably in key stage 2, make good progress, and this ensures that they attain highly in a wide range of subjects.
- Evidence of pupils' sustained attainment can be found in their workbooks in subjects including English, mathematics, history and French, where pupils are very often working within or above age-related expectations.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 is typically above the national average. Over time, pupils consistently pass entrance examinations to the selective school of their choice. Evidence from pupils' work in books shows that pupils reach good standards, not only in English and mathematics but in other subjects.
- Pupils' work is of a good quality, particularly their written presentation and formation of handwriting. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for learning when they begin the next stages of their education.
- Pupils learn to read with confidence. By the time they leave in Year 6 they have a well-developed enthusiasm and love of reading. Some pupils' starting points for reading are low upon entry to Longwood. However, they are well supported in school with additional targeted help.
- Pupils progress to reading difficult books both regularly and fluently. They are able to talk about their favourite authors and access complex texts at an early age. The positive promotion of reading ensures that pupils enjoy what they are reading, and achieve well from their starting points.
- From a wide range of starting points, pupils make good progress in writing. This is particularly evident where pupils have the opportunity to write for a sustained length of time based upon various stimuli focused on what they have been learning. Examples of high-quality extended writing are evident across the curriculum, for example in history, geography and science, and pupils demonstrate good progress in their twice-weekly 'essay' writing.
- Pupils' books show that they learn a wide range of mathematical concepts and learn to apply their knowledge to solve problems well. Pupils' work and inspectors' observations of

learning demonstrate that pupils across the school have a sound, developing understanding of mathematical number operations. Pupils are able to accurately and successfully use a variety of calculation methods as required.

- The most able pupils are quickly identified by their teachers and provided with work which allows them to make effective progress.
- Individualised, targeted support is well considered and regularly available for a small group of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. The special educational needs coordinator ensures that the additional needs of the pupils are assessed and reviewed in an appropriate and timely way. This ensures that this group of pupils make good progress from their starting points, both academically and in their personal, emotional and social development.
- Pupils enjoy the chance to learn and achieve well across a broad range of subjects. They also enjoy learning from specialist subject teachers such as for French and PE.
- Pupils' attainment across the school is further confirmed through the consistently high scores they obtain in ongoing internal assessments. However, leaders do not have evidence to be secure and confident about pupils making as much progress as they could. This was particularly the case for pupils in key stage 1.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- The early years provision is judged as inadequate overall because of the flaws relating to the school's leadership and management of safeguarding procedures. These same weaknesses apply to the early years setting.
- Leadership roles and responsibilities for the early years are unclear.
- Leaders do not consistently use the school's assessment system to its fullest effect to focus on the progress that children make in early years. All staff track progress over time with notes, discussions and evidence in children's profiles. These are informative about children's different learning experiences. However, staff do not always identify next steps for learning sharply enough, and this slows down progress.
- Although children make progress from their varying starting points, it is not monitored precisely enough to ensure that teaching and learning can be planned to consistently meet the needs of all children. As a result, there are occasions when some children do not make as much progress as they should.
- Children enter the early years with skills, knowledge and understanding that are typical for children of the same age. The school's assessment information suggests that the proportion of children attaining the early learning goals by the end of their Reception Year is above the national average.
- Work in the children's books in the Reception class show that children have made at least expected progress from their starting points, and in many cases good progress, throughout the year.
- Children's writing skills have developed, engaging the reader with their attempts at writing complete sentences. Children use familiar vocabulary and apply their knowledge of forming both upper-case and lower-case letters.

- Children's recording of mathematical ideas and number is developing. This is exemplified through photographic evidence and recorded observations of their achievements.
- Adults' relationships with children are nurturing and well established. This effectively supports children's personal development and well-being. As a result, children are keen to explore and investigate, and eager to learn.
- Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour. This leads to children working and playing well together, while displaying exemplary behaviour. Children are motivated and interested when working with adults. They listen attentively and follow instructions conscientiously. Consequently, children are ready to learn.
- The transition from Nursery to Reception is seamless. Most children transfer to the school from the Nursery and pre-school provision on the same site. The staff team in both Nursery and Reception work well together. They are passionate and thoughtful about their work. Staff liaise closely with parents to ease children's transition into both the Nursery and Reception setting. As a result, children quickly gain confidence and settle into the routines of school life from a very young age and are well prepared for their move into Year 1.
- Parents have a positive view of the early years and are pleased with the way that children settle quickly with minimal worry and anxiety. This is because staff have developed strong links with parents to keep them informed about their children's well-being and learning. Parents access the online observations of all their child has achieved and discuss their child's progress regularly. Consequently, parents are very happy with how well their children are doing in Longwood's Nursery and Reception.

School details

Unique reference number	117662
DfE registration number	919/6236
Inspection number	10038902

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	257
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Malcolm and Sally Livesey
Headteacher	Claire May
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,590
Telephone number	01923 253715
Website	www.longwoodschool.co.uk
Email address	info@longwoodschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–6 November 2014

Information about this school

- Longwood School and Nursery is a small independent school for children from three months to 11 years of age. It has a separate nursery for children aged three months to three years old, which was inspected on 14 March 2014. There are 115 pupils on the school roll and a further 119 in the Nursery.
- There are three classes for the early years, and three mixed-age classes for pupils aged five to 11 years of age.
- Pupils who attend the school come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups, but all are fluent in English.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well below average. No pupils

currently have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs.

- No disadvantaged pupils attend the school.
- This is a family-run school.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted with one day's notice.
- Inspectors observed learning in every class. They also looked at a range of pupils' books in order to evaluate pupils' progress over time.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, the proprietors and two groups of pupils. Inspectors conducted three meetings with parents.
- Inspectors scrutinised school improvement documents; policies; information on pupils' progress; records of the quality of teaching and information on pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Safeguarding documentation was scrutinised at the start of the inspection, and checked again for compliance before inspectors left the school.
- Inspectors considered 97 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 12 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

John Daniell, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tracy Fielding

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must meet the following independent school standards

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that:
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (2005).
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that:
 - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

The school must meet the following statutory requirements for the early years foundation stage

- The proprietor must ensure that safeguarding and welfare requirements are met.

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