

Langley School

Trinity Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B75 6TJ

Inspection dates

8–9 May 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have worked hard to address the priorities identified for improvement. All aspects of the school are now good and improving.
- Safeguarding is central to what the school does. The school is a calm and welcoming place that supports pupils to be enthusiastic learners.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is good. Pupils are proud of their work and enjoy talking about what they are learning.
- Until recently, performance management has not been used as effectively as it should be to support teachers to develop their skills.
- Pupils have access to a wide range of opportunities that support their development, including forest school, rock climbing and horse riding.
- From the moment they enter the school, pupils are well supported through a range of interventions to meet their individual special needs.
- The most able pupils are starting to make increased levels of progress, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- Systems to support parents and carers are strong and developing, particularly for those whose child is preparing for the next steps in education or those whose child's attendance is not high enough.
- Staff are skilled at building excellent relationships with pupils and getting to know their needs. They manage challenging behaviour effectively and teach pupils ways to manage their emotions and behaviour well.
- Inconsistency in the use of assessment means that some pupils are not always provided with activities that are appropriately matched to their ability.
- A minority of staff remain unclear about changes to the vision of the school and how this is likely to affect their roles in the future. As a result, they are not as fully supportive of the changes as they might be.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should:
 - strengthen communication between senior leaders and staff in order to ensure that all have a clear understanding of the reasons for change, and the improvements this will bring about
 - ensure that assessment information is used to plan precise teaching and learning strategies, so that teachers can identify pupils who are falling behind in their learning or need more challenge
 - identify and implement an effective appraisal process to ensure that standards are high and teachers are appropriately held to account.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the last inspection, leaders have implemented an effective plan of action to address weaknesses in provision. While there is more to be done, the impact of this work is evident across the school. Leaders and governors are clear that the provision must reflect the highest expectations for every child.
- The school has a welcoming and caring ethos. Pupils feel safe and are eager to learn. Staff are passionate about meeting the needs of pupils and work hard to make sure they achieve the best outcomes possible.
- Recently appointed leaders are developing a clearer understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. As a result, leaders and governors have a clearer understanding of what the school needs to do to improve further.
- Recent developments at middle leadership level mean that these members of staff are able to identify the strengths in their subjects. They now check the impact of their work in improving teaching and learning and what needs to be done to improve pupil's outcomes further.
- Leaders have identified inconsistencies in performance appraisal systems. In some cases, expectations about what is to be achieved in class have not been high enough, which has resulted in pupils not achieving the best outcomes they are capable of. Monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment has been limited. Leaders have now identified that this is an urgent area for development.
- Professional development is being used to enhance the quality of teaching and learning across the school. For example, language development and practical mathematics training has been implemented recently. As a result of this training, the skills of staff are improving.
- Since the start of the year, leaders have identified the need to increase the amount of time that pupils have access to mathematics and English. This ensures that pupils are able to gain the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics more effectively. Leaders have already identified this is an area for improvement.
- Provision for meeting individual needs is a strength of the school. Staff know the needs of the pupils well and ensure that provision is bespoke and flexible to their needs. Pupils are well supported by an intervention team that provides therapeutic and academic provisions. Communication skills, fine motor skills and personal hygiene skills are just a few of the strategies provided by this team.
- Additional government funding is used well to support the development of pupils. The pupil premium is now allocated effectively to ensure that appropriate strategies are used to support disadvantaged pupils. The physical education and sport premium is used well to ensure that pupils have access to a wide range of activities such as yoga, horse riding and rock climbing.
- Leaders have worked hard to establish links with other schools and organisations that can provide them with independent scrutiny and challenge. Partnerships, such as the Learning Trust for Excellence, have effectively supported this work.

- Not only has this identified what areas are needed for development, but also how Langley staff can support the development of other schools. This approach has proved effective in helping the school to develop some strong approaches to help pupils succeed.
- While some staff are positive about recent changes to the school, there remains a minority of staff who do not have a clear enough understanding of the vision for the school, the changes that are needed and the improvements that these changes will bring. This means that they are unable to fully understand their roles in the future development of the school.

Governance of the school

- Governance is strong.
- Governors have carefully monitored and evaluated the school's development through the recent period of change. They clearly share the school's vision to increase the rates of progress for all pupils and challenge underperformance.
- Members of the governing body involve themselves in finding out about the work of the school through focused visits to the school. They track all aspects of the school's performance keenly. They are not afraid to ask probing questions to make sure that they have a strong understanding of the quality of provision at the school. Therefore, they are able to hold leaders to account about achievement and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Governors monitor finances well, ensuring that funding is well used to support all groups.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding has a very high profile at the school. Staff are fully aware of their responsibilities for keeping pupils safe and work hard to ensure that concerns are dealt with quickly and effectively.
- All policies, procedures and systems relating to safeguarding are robust and rigorous. Regular, high-quality training ensures that all members of staff have a detailed knowledge of what constitutes abuse. Safeguarding leaders have a detailed understanding of child protection cases. This includes what actions are needed to ensure that pupils are safe.
- When concerns are raised, there are rigorous and effective responses. Where appropriate, this involves working with a range of different services, such as social care and the local authority.
- Leaders make sure that recruitment procedures for new staff are thorough. They carry out all the required checks to ensure that adults are suitable to work with pupils.
- Staff are equally proactive in working with parents and carers to reduce the risk of concerns arising. Learning mentors work with parents closely to instigate early help processes well. As well as helping parents with strategies to use at home, this enables positive relationships to be forged.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching enables pupils to make substantial progress, both academically and personally. In the majority of cases, teachers have high expectations of what all their pupils can achieve. Pupils show excellent attitudes in class, enjoy learning and are motivated to do their best.
- Teachers are skilful in adapting teaching opportunities to make sure that all pupils are able to access learning. Their strong understanding of the individual needs of the pupils means barriers to learning are overcome quickly so that pupils are ready to learn.
- Teachers' careful planning ensures that teaching effectively meets pupils' needs. Teachers have a sound knowledge of their subjects and are skilled at translating this to make it accessible and relevant to their pupils. Pupils are pushed to achieve through the challenge built into all lessons.
- Despite the overall strengths in the way teachers plan and adapt teaching to meet pupils' needs, there are areas where this is not always the case. In some year groups, assessment information is not always used effectively to ensure that learning tasks are matched well enough to pupils' learning needs. Sometimes, most-able pupils find the tasks too easy and lower-ability pupils cannot complete learning tasks because they are not equipped with the necessary skills. For example, pupils were observed being taught about sequencing three-digit numbers, without having an understanding of the value of single digit numbers. As a result, pupils lost interest in the activity quickly and did not make the best progress.
- Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 understood what they need to do to achieve the next steps in their learning. However, in a minority of classes, teachers do not follow the school's assessment policy consistently. As a result, pupils are sometimes unclear about what they need to do next to improve their work. The vast majority of pupils take great pride in their work and are proud to share it and talk about what they are doing. Work in books, most noticeably in English and mathematics, is well presented, clear and shows progress over time. In the strongest cases, work has a clear intention, is assessed precisely and outcomes are shared with pupils.
- The quality of teaching and learning for most-able pupils has improved greatly over this year. As a result of increased expectations, these pupils are now making greater progress over time. This means that leaders and teachers are now able to set more precise targets about future progress.
- The quality of mathematics teaching is improving and this is reflected in the increased number of pupils making stronger progress. Teachers are now planning opportunities for pupils to practise their problem-solving and reasoning skills more often.
- These opportunities encourage pupils to think more deeply about where and when to apply specific mathematical skills. Teachers are teaching basic skills effectively and pupils are becoming more confident in explaining their calculations.
- The teaching of reading is strong. It is well structured and effective. The school is effective in identifying the best way for the pupils to develop a word-level understanding. Teachers and leaders encourage a love of reading across the school.

Older pupils are developing strong recall, comprehension and reasoning skills to match their reading fluency and vocabulary awareness.

- Pupils are provided with opportunities to write at length. This gives opportunities to put into practice skills that have been taught over the previous lessons. This means that the quality of writing is improving rapidly over time. Teachers' planning ensures that spelling and grammar are well taught.
- Teaching assistants work hard to support pupils' learning. They receive effective training and professional development. This ensures that they have the necessary skills to help pupils to make better progress.
- More recently, leaders have been able to gain a clearer understanding of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across school. As a result, they can now plan appropriate actions to further develop this area.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils demonstrate the most positive attitude to learning and are keen to engage with learning.
- A positive emphasis is placed on supporting pupils' awareness of rights and respect. The school has worked hard to develop an environment where pupils can feel safe and respected, while nurturing their talents. The 'Rights Respecting Schools' Bronze award was recently achieved.
- Playtimes are well organised, providing a range of activities that are supported by staff. For example, these times are used well to develop interaction opportunities with the primary school that shares the same site. As a result of this, and support provided by the intervention team, pupils play well with each other and there are few incidents of poor behaviour.
- Bullying is rare, and pupils know what to do if they feel that someone is bullying them. They are confident that the staff would help them and would 'sort it'. However, pupils' understanding of bullying is underdeveloped. This means that they have a limited understanding of aspects such as e-safety and how to keep themselves safe while online.
- Assemblies and lessons support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They reflect the strong caring ethos of the school. The school provides a range of extra-curricular opportunities, including residential visits and lunchtime clubs. Pupils enjoy their lessons and their learning is reinforced by related educational visits.
- Attendance is high and continues to improve across all groups. Attendance policies and procedures are effectively managed by a highly skilled team.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Governors and leaders have created a positive and welcoming atmosphere across the

school. Pupils play well together and the school is very inclusive, with staff and pupils keen to make everyone feel involved and valued. Pupils show respect for others and are keen to impress their teachers. Pupils comment on the positive behaviour across the school and how well good behaviour is rewarded.

- Leaders have successfully developed this area to ensure that behaviour is well understood so that the most effective strategies can be implemented. The recently appointed inclusion manager has joined a highly effective staff group that works hard to understand the reasons for pupils' behaviour. As a result of this, staff are proactive in providing the right conditions and provision to ensure that behaviour does not deteriorate.
- At the start of the day, pupils are greeted warmly. Staff ask how pupils are feeling and how pupils have behaved on the bus. Pupils come into school willingly. Because routines are clear and consistent, pupils know what to expect.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. Pupils work hard to develop their skills, often showing great resilience. Those who find it difficult to settle and to concentrate make good progress as a result of flexible and bespoke planning that identifies barriers to learning quickly.
- Leaders use fixed-term exclusions only on rare occasions, and only for a very short period of time.
- The use of physical intervention is well managed, and staff are well trained in de-escalation strategies. As a result, challenging behaviour is managed quickly, allowing for pupils to return to learning. Incidents are well recorded, analysed and learned from.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and improving. Highly responsive staff and effective procedures mean that unexplained absence is rare and responded to quickly. Staff are proactive in working with parents to strengthen this further and use a variety of different strategies to encourage high levels of attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Across the school, pupils of all ages and who have different needs are making good progress.
- The youngest pupils are making rapid progress with very relevant skills. They learn early communication, English and mathematics skills well. For example, some pupils who started at the school recently without a way of communicating have now started to use words to communicate. Staff are skilful in developing early independence skills.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including those who are looked after, make the same strong progress as other pupils in mathematics. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is not as strong in reading and writing. However, differences between the progress they make and that made by other pupils are diminishing.
- Progress since September 2018 for the majority of pupils is good or better across the curriculum. This is due to the effort and commitment of leaders and staff to raise standards by increasing expectations about what can be achieved.
- The majority of the most able pupils make good progress in developing their reading

and writing skills over time.

- Effective transitions to secondary schools mean that pupils are well prepared for next steps. Staff work well with a range of partners to ensure that parents have a clear understanding of what school options are available for their child. Once decisions have been made, staff work with the new provision, and the family, to identify a bespoke transition package for the child.

Early years provision

Good

- Those with responsibility for the early years have a detailed understanding of the effectiveness of the provision. They keep detailed records and ensure that changes are made to the provision in order to ensure that children, at the very earliest stages, have their needs met well. For example, special groups are identified throughout the day that provide additional support to those pupils who find large group sessions difficult.
- Children come into the school often with very low levels of ability. Staff are quick to assess each child's ability to communicate and engage with learning, in order to provide an effective baseline. All children are assessed within the first six weeks of starting at the school. This means that the provision is effective in making best use of their time at the earliest stages of learning.
- Children progress well and start to develop early communication quickly. When needed, communication systems for those who are yet to use words are identified quickly and implemented well.
- Children have planned opportunities to develop choice-making skills and independent learning. For example, in one lesson observed, the children used communication boards to choose their next activities. When the choices had been made, children were then successful in gathering the resources needed for the activity for themselves.
- Teachers have a very clear understanding about where the children are in terms of their development. Systems are embedded to ensure that this understanding is regularly updated.
- Learning journals are well maintained and used effectively to engage with parents. Parents are encouraged to respond to the progress that children are making in school. In many cases, parents then contribute successful progress that is made at home. This communication is ensuring that partnerships are being developed at the earliest stages.
- The early years environment has been carefully considered and constructed to meet the needs of the children within the provision. While providing a range of resources for learning that are easily accessible, the environment is based on a low arousal approach. This means that children are less likely to be distracted from learning.
- Those with responsibility for the early years ensure that all members of staff have a strong understanding of the needs of the children. Supervision is very strong, while ensuring that children have the opportunities to explore and take risks. For example, during a forest school session, children explored a range of activities, such as water play, muddy play and creative tasks.
- The safeguarding and welfare requirements are fully met in each of the early years

classes.

- Detailed transition plans mean that children are well prepared for moving into the next stage in school. Early years staff work well with staff in later stages in the school to make sure children progress to more challenging learning quickly.

School details

Unique reference number	103630
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10083948

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lynda Thomas
Executive Headteacher	Jeanette Ashwin
Telephone number	01216 752929
Website	www.langley.bham.sch.uk
Email address	enquiry@langley.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 October 2018

Information about this school

- Langley is a school that caters for pupils who have a wide range of disabilities and needs. The main groups of pupils are those with moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and autism spectrum disorders. However, and more recently, a greater number have a range of special needs, such as speech and language difficulties, and sensory and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Many of the pupils do not live in the immediate locality of the school and a large number of pupils are transported to and from school by minibuses.
- Approximately 45% of pupils are disadvantaged pupils. The school has a number of children looked after on roll. Almost three quarters of pupils are boys.
- Pupils enter the school at different points during the primary age range, sometimes as late as upper key stage 2.
- The school shares a building with a mainstream school, Coppice School. In September 2012, it became federated with Beaufort School, another special school for primary-

aged pupils. The two schools share a governing body. More recently, Langley School has become an active member of the Learning Trust for Excellence, which is a partnership of mainstream primary and secondary schools, higher education providers and special schools.

- The executive headteacher took up her post in September 2018.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 18 lessons, some of which were observed jointly with the executive headteacher or assistant headteacher. Inspectors looked at examples of pupils' work in all year groups to gain a view of the impact of teaching over time.
- Inspectors considered parents' opinions through scrutinising the 12 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 3 free-text responses. Inspectors were able to talk with a small number of parents at the start of the day when they brought their children to school. They also took account of the 27 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and 11 paper copies of the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils during lessons and around the school. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime, as well as in lessons.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, assistant headteacher, middle leaders, teachers, teaching assistants, intervention team members, designated safeguarding leads, members of the administration team, and members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector also spoke to representatives from the local education partnership.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including: the schools' plan for improvement; school self-evaluation; reports from external reviews of provision; the most recent information on the achievement and progress of pupils; information relating to the health, safety and safeguarding of pupils; the most recent data relating to the attendance of pupils; and minutes of the governing body meetings.
- Inspectors considered the wide range and quality of information provided on the school website.
- The school's safeguarding policies, practice and procedures were scrutinised by inspectors.

Inspection team

Chris Pollitt, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jo Owen	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Hayes	Ofsted Inspector

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