

Longwood School & Nursery

Bushey Hall Drive, Bushey, Hertfordshire WD23 2QG

Inspection dates

18 to 20 June 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	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The proprietor and headteacher have ensured that the independent school standards are met.
- The headteacher provides calm, stable leadership. The school offers a good standard of education.
- Leaders ensure that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place and are understood and used well by all staff. Pupils are kept safe and well cared for.
- Pupils enjoy the broad curriculum, which is enhanced by a wide range of trips, clubs and other events.
- The quality of teaching overall is good. Teachers are beginning to work together to share their knowledge and expertise effectively.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Staff are effective role models for pupils. This contributes to pupils' positive attitudes to learning and to their achievements.
- Children thrive in the early years. Strong, reflective teaching in a nurturing environment ensures that children achieve well.
- Parents and carers are very positive about the school. They appreciate the safe and happy environment the school provides for their children.
- Almost all leadership roles are undertaken by the headteacher. The development of the school has not been accompanied by the creation of a wider, established leadership team to strengthen the school's capacity to improve.
- The proprietor has a good understanding of the school's strengths and priorities. However, systems are not in place to hold leaders to account rigorously to ensure that their actions are effective and lead to continuous improvement.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are taught well in a range of subjects. However, they do not have a clear understanding of pupils' achievements in all subjects so as to ensure that pupils make consistently strong progress across the curriculum.
- Teachers do not implement leaders' chosen teaching strategies consistently in order to support pupils' achievements effectively over time.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - building a leadership team to better support the headteacher in moving the school forward and contributing to school improvement work
 - developing systems to review the school's work so that leaders are held to account more rigorously
 - monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress in all subjects to identify any underachievement and take action to raise standards further.
- Enhance teaching, learning and pupils' achievements further by firmly establishing the school's chosen strategies so that they are used consistently throughout the school and have a long-lasting impact on improving pupils' outcomes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Longwood School and Nursery is a positive, happy place where pupils learn and develop well. The headteacher's calm and determined leadership has ensured that the areas for improvement identified at the previous full inspection have been successfully resolved.
- The proprietor and the headteacher ensure that all the independent school standards are met. Policies and procedures are personalised to the work of the school. They are effective in promoting the school's aims.
- Leaders have developed a broad and relevant curriculum that is regularly enlivened by special events. Topics often include a school visit, for example, to the nearby Aldenham Country Park, or further afield to Osmington Bay. Such visits extend pupils' experiences and enable them to make meaningful links in their learning. Following a Year 5 and Year 6 visit to Mountfitchet Castle, pupils' workbooks demonstrated a clear understanding of medieval motte and bailey castles. The variety of lunchtime and after-school clubs, along with opportunities to learn to speak French and play a musical instrument, further enhance pupils' physical and creative development.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils learn about a wide variety of religions and cultures and are respectful of them. Staff encourage pupils to take an active part in the school and local community, for example by raising money for local charities. Pupils were keen to tell inspectors how they had written to Arsenal football club and successfully obtained match tickets in order to support individuals through the '52 Lives' charity. In these ways, the school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Provision for the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is well led and managed. As a result, pupils targeted for support receive additional help or therapy to ensure that they make progress in line with their peers.
- The headteacher checks the quality of teaching in English and mathematics through observing lessons, scrutinising teachers' plans, talking to pupils and looking at pupils' work. Consequently, leaders can identify where teaching approaches are most effective and where they need to improve. Even so, leaders do not have a clear picture of pupils' progress in subjects such as history, geography and art. The school's chosen system for assessing pupils' achievements is not firmly in place. This hampers leaders from evaluating the progress pupils make in all subjects, to ensure that pupils achieve consistently well across the curriculum.
- Almost all parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and those who inspectors met during the inspection, were very complimentary about the school. Parents appreciate the positive learning environment and the many experiences the school provides for their children. One parent summed up the views of many by saying: 'This is a wonderful nurturing school that aims to build children's confidence as well as focus on developing them academically.' Almost all parents would recommend the school to others.

Governance

- The proprietor is responsible for fulfilling the role of governance.
- The proprietor and headteacher acted swiftly to address the areas for improvement identified at the previous full inspection. They have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas for further improvement.
- Currently, the headteacher undertakes too many leadership roles. Without the support of a leadership team to absorb some of the workload and contribute to school improvement work, leadership capacity to improve the quality of education further is limited.
- While the proprietor has carried out the governance role rigorously to ensure that all of the independent school standards are now met, leaders are not held sufficiently to account to make sure that the quality of education is sustained and continues to improve. The proprietor relies too much on information given to him by the headteacher. There are currently limited systems in place to check the accuracy of these judgements and ensure that the headteacher is given appropriate support and challenge.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The proprietor and headteacher have improved the oversight of safeguarding and the premises management of the school significantly.
- Staff receive good training and know how to raise concerns, including contacting external agencies if appropriate. New staff receive a comprehensive induction programme, covering all aspects of safeguarding, including health and safety.
- Leaders' approach to staff recruitment is rigorous. All staff undergo the required pre-employment checks. Records of these checks are well maintained.
- The site management of the school has improved. The proprietor and leaders have organised their own training and sought advice from external specialists. Consequently, they are knowledgeable about how to maintain standards of health and safety and do so confidently. For example, the proprietor continually assesses the condition of the premises to ensure that it provides pupils with a safe and secure environment. Detailed records of checks, including those of fire safety, show that leaders spot and deal with potential hazards promptly, so the welfare of pupils, staff and visitors is maintained.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for. Parents agree that their children are safe and happy in this school. The school's safeguarding policy reflects the latest legal guidance and is made available to parents on the school's website, so they are well-informed about how the school ensures their children are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Classrooms are calm and purposeful environments. Positive relationships between staff and pupils contribute to pupils' good attitudes to learning and support them to achieve well.
- Teachers plan learning that motivates and interests pupils. Consequently, most pupils

throughout the school are engaged in learning and keen to succeed. Staff ask questions skilfully to probe pupils' ideas further and encourage pupils to expand on their explanations. Teaching assistants are deployed well to help pupils who need additional support in lessons to catch up quickly.

- Teachers' subject knowledge is good, and this helps them to support pupils effectively. During an English lesson in the Year 1 and Year 2 class, the teacher introduced pupils to new vocabulary, challenging them to find more interesting words to replace 'said'. Pupils used thesauruses successfully to find words such as 'announced' and 'replied'.
- Phonics is taught consistently well and effectively. Pupils apply their phonics knowledge accurately in their reading. They make strong progress and most pupils quickly become confident and competent readers.
- Staff give pupils frequent opportunities to develop their reading skills and they are encouraged to read for enjoyment. Teachers foster a love of reading through carefully selected texts and traditional tales.
- Teachers ensure that pupils are supported well with writing. Pupils have opportunities to write for a range of purposes and this supports their mastery of written language well. For example, in the Year 3 and Year 4 class, following work on 'The Twits' by Roald Dahl, pupils were enthusiastically writing letters to the RSPCA animal welfare charity to complain about how Mr and Mrs Twit were mistreating the monkeys in the story.
- Mathematics is taught well across the school. Well-planned activities build effectively on pupils' prior learning. Pupils have frequent opportunities to develop a deep understanding of number systems. They apply their knowledge and skills confidently to solve challenging problems, particularly in Year 5 and Year 6.
- Pupils enjoy the specialist physical education (PE) lessons, which also support school staff to develop their skills in teaching this aspect of the curriculum. The school makes good use of the neighbouring leisure centre to provide swimming lessons and team games. Pupils understand how important it is to eat healthily and keep fit.
- Pupils across the school also have access to specialist music teaching, and all pupils learn to play a variety of musical instruments during their time at the school. Pupils told inspectors that they also enjoy their 'fun' French lessons.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have developed effective systems for checking pupils' progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Teachers identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding and plan activities to fill those gaps as a priority. As a result, teachers ensure that tasks match pupils' needs. Workbooks show that most pupils, including the most able, make strong progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils with SEND receive good support from skilled teaching assistants who understand their particular needs. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics across the school.
- Throughout the school, teachers use a range of strategies to support the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders do not check closely enough that teachers are using the school's chosen approaches consistently in different year groups, so that pupils' achievement builds continuously on previous learning and standards continue to rise.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school is a nurturing community. There is a strong sense of family and belonging in this small school. Pupils are friendly and welcoming. Staff provide good role models for pupils. Pupils enjoy learning and most have positive, confident attitudes to their work.
- During the inspection, pupils showed a good understanding of the many different family relationships and the rich variety of cultures and religions in society.
- Pupils know about bullying and what to do if they see or experience it. Pupils say bullying is very rare and that they are confident their teachers will sort out any incidents quickly. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe in a variety of ways, including crossing the road or keeping personal information private when online.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunities the school provides for them to take on responsibilities, such as house captains and assembly prefects, in order to contribute to the smooth running of the school. Additionally, Year 6 pupils 'buddy up' with children in the Reception class. They look after the younger children during shared play times and visits. After a joint visit to Mountfitchet Castle, the older pupils helped to organise an assembly involving both year groups.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well and are polite and courteous. In lessons, they are enthusiastic about their learning. During lunchtimes and playtimes, pupils chat happily with their friends and play sensibly with the wide range of equipment available.
- Pupils told inspectors that the school's chosen behaviour system is fair and encourages them to conduct themselves in a kind and sensible manner. There is very little low-level disruption in lessons. Incidents of poor behaviour are uncommon.
- Leaders identify and follow up any attendance issues swiftly. They know pupils and their families well. Staff offer advice and support for any vulnerable families when necessary. As a result, the attendance of pupils across the school is above the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In all classes, most pupils, including the most able, make good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In reading, pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 build on their phonics knowledge that they acquired in the early years. A small proportion of pupils, working at or below the age-related expectations in phonics, are targeted for additional support. Older pupils use their improving knowledge of vocabulary, and comprehension skills, with increasing confidence and accuracy. For example, pupils' work shows that they expand their explanations to answer more complex questions.
- Pupils' increasing range of vocabulary is evident in the good-quality written work they

produce. Older pupils use increasingly complex vocabulary in their creative writing. Pupils' work clearly demonstrates good progress over time in this subject. The majority of pupils are writing at or above standards that are typical for their age.

- In mathematics, pupils' work is consistently of good quality. Teachers encourage pupils' resilience, particularly when solving more challenging problems. Pupils apply their mathematical knowledge effectively in other subjects where appropriate, for example when designing and interpreting tables and charts in science.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points because of the well-targeted support they receive.
- Pupils talk confidently about the knowledge they have in some other curriculum subjects. For example, in science, a group of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils explained clearly that during an investigation about air resistance, when they had to run while holding paper sheets, they discovered that the larger the surface area of different sizes of paper, the more resistance there was.
- Pupils in Year 6 are well prepared for the next stage of their education and look forward to their future learning at the secondary schools they will attend.

Early years provision

Good

- The school meets the standards set in the statutory framework for early years education.
- Almost all children attend the school's nursery before joining the pre-school and Reception classes. Children enter the Reception class with knowledge and skills typical of children of a similar age nationally. Most children make strong progress and develop into confident learners. Children are well prepared for Year 1 because of the good teaching they receive.
- The early years setting is a delightful place for children to learn. Staff ensure that all areas of learning are planned for creatively in both the pre-school and the Reception classes. Children are interested in the activities and learning spaces which are set up inside and outside the classrooms. Role play areas enable children to develop early literacy skills. For example, during the inspection, some pre-school children were using their role play area as a beach café. They described what it was like to be 'near the sea' and busily used 'mark-making' to write their menus.
- Staff interact well with children. They use questions and conversations skilfully to encourage children to talk about their learning. Any mispronunciations are corrected sensitively.
- Phonics is taught systematically from the start of the Reception Year. Teachers use assessment well during lessons to identify children who are struggling. They give these children the individual help they need quickly so they are able to catch up.
- The behaviour of children is good because of adults' high expectations. Transitions between learning activities are managed well because routines are established. As a result, most children follow instructions and use resources sensibly. They share ideas and take turns well.
- There are strong links with parents. Staff assess children's progress in all areas of learning. Parents are able to see their child's achievement captured in pictures and notes

made by staff. Regular communication and practical workshops enable parents to understand their children's progress and how they can support their children with their learning at home.

- Safeguarding is equally effective in the early years as it is in the rest of the school. All welfare requirements are met in both the pre-school and Reception classes. Staff are vigilant at the start and end of the school day. Risk assessments are carried out daily to make sure the learning environment is clean and safe.

School details

Unique reference number	117662
DfE registration number	919/6236
Inspection number	10093912

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	115
Proprietor	Malcolm Livesey
Headteacher	Claire May
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,070
Telephone number	01923 253715
Website	www.longwoodschool.co.uk
Email address	info@longwoodschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 to 7 December 2017

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 nursery for children aged three months to three years old, which is registered separately and was not included in this inspection. There are 115 pupils on the school roll and a further 130 in the separate Nursery.
- In the school, there are three classes for the early years, and three mixed-age classes comprising: Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils who attend the school come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups, but all are fluent in English.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well below the national average. Currently, no

pupils are supported by an education, health and care plan.

- The school's last full standard inspection was in December 2017. It did not meet all the independent school standards and the school's overall effectiveness was judged inadequate.
- The school submitted a proposed action plan to identify how it would address the unmet standards. An evaluation of the action plan was completed by Ofsted in March 2018. The proposed action plan was deemed acceptable with minor modifications.
- A progress monitoring inspection took place in June 2018. The school met all the standards that were checked during the inspection.
- Since the progress monitoring inspection in June 2018, the school has moved from being run by two proprietors to being run by a single proprietor.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted with one day's notice.
- Inspectors carried out an in-depth tour of the school and checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards. Inspectors also looked at the school's single central record, safeguarding procedures and the school's risk assessments.
- Inspectors visited all classrooms to observe teaching, pupils' learning and behaviour. They also looked at a wide range of pupils' workbooks in order to evaluate pupils' progress over time.
- Meetings were held with the proprietor, the headteacher and the senior management team. Inspectors held meetings with two groups of parents and a group of teachers.
- Inspectors met formally with two groups of pupils to discuss their learning and many aspects of school life. Inspectors also spoke to pupils informally in lessons, and around the school at breaktimes and lunchtimes, to seek their views about the school.
- Some pupils were heard reading their books. The inspectors also talked to pupils about their reading habits and looked at their reading records.
- The school's website was scrutinised along with a range of school documents, including: policies; the school's own evaluation; improvement plans; curriculum plans; records of the quality of teaching; minutes from the senior management team meetings; safeguarding; and information about pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the 51 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 51 responses to the Ofsted free-text system. Inspectors also considered the seven responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's online pupils' survey.
- The Year 5 and Year 6 class was out of school on a residential visit for the two full days of the inspection. The Reception class was out of school on an educational trip on the third day of the inspection.

Inspection team

Fiona Webb, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Davies

Ofsted Inspector

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