



# Long Marston Primary Voluntary Aided Church of England School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 117459  
**LEA** HERTFORDSHIRE LEA  
**Inspection number** 280086  
**Inspection dates** 21 February 2006 to 22 February 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Ms. Margaret Jones LI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Station Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		HP23 4QS
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01296668386
<b>Number on roll</b>	128	<b>Fax number</b>	01296660412
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs. Joanna Mayers
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14 March 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr. Peter Dickinson

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Long Marston Voluntary Aided Church of England primary school is a smaller than average primary school. It serves Long Marston and the surrounding villages but also currently has a third of pupils on roll from outside this area. A very small proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is slightly above national average. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic groups. The school is currently working towards Healthy Schools Status. It works closely with neighbouring schools and is a member of the Tring Learning Network as well as of Tring Tomorrow, a partnership between local businesses and schools. The school enjoys good support from the community, which is reflected in the very strong parents' association.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Her Majesty's Inspector and the headteacher agree that Long Marston primary school provides a good standard of education. The school has many strengths and no aspect of its work is inadequate. Parents are very happy with all that is done for their children. When children start school, most have the expected skills and abilities. By the time they leave, when they are aged 11, most of them are doing much better than other children of their age. The youngest children get off to a sound start in the Reception and Year 1 class. They achieve average results in the tests for 7 year olds, and make good progress in Years 3 to 6. Progress in writing is not as good as in reading and mathematics. Teaching is good overall and often uses exciting methods to capture the full attention of the pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because of a high level of care and support. More able pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not always do as well as they could. Leadership and management are good. The school is well led by the headteacher who is supported by knowledgeable and hard-working staff and governors. The senior management team have an accurate understanding of what needs to be improved, although the plans to do this are not sufficiently detailed. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection, including a portable laptop suite to develop the use of computers. The school is in a good position to move forward. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They really enjoy coming to school and their behaviour is excellent. The school has made good partnership links with a variety of organisations to improve services for pupils. The school includes all pupils well in everything it provides and provides good value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards for pupils aged 5 to 7, especially for the more able, by ensuring they get work which matches their ability. - Using the scheme in place, continue to improve pupils' writing across the school. - Improve the quality of school development planning by making targets more specific and measurable.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children begin school with the range of skills and knowledge typical for five- year-olds. The youngest children are currently achieving satisfactorily in all areas of their learning and personal development. The class teacher is well supported by a trained nursery nurse and this ensures that the children settle quickly. Children in Year 1 are making good progress in many areas but only satisfactory progress in writing. The 2005 national test results show that, by the time pupils reach the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are in line with the national average. However, fewer of the more able pupils achieve the higher levels than happens in other schools, and no pupils reached the higher levels in writing. Achievement is generally good across the school. The school met its challenging targets in 2005 and results at the end of Year 6 were

significantly above the national average. More pupils than usual reached the higher levels, particularly in mathematics. Pupils' number skills are well developed. For example, in a Year 4 lesson pupils were able to do quick mental calculations in order to work out the perimeters of different shapes. Pupils read well, listen carefully and most are able to express their views clearly. Their writing skills are not as advanced, and some pupils struggle with handwriting and spelling. The school is aware of this and has introduced a special scheme to teach spelling, which is having a positive impact. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities do well because their difficulties are diagnosed promptly and effective use is made of support from a nearby specialised centre.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are polite, friendly and are very supportive towards each other. They love coming to school and attendance rates are above average. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy accepting responsibility. Pupils are involved in many interesting productions, clubs and sports competitions and they make a good contribution to the community. Pupils know about eating healthy food and the importance of exercise. Many of them eat the healthy school lunch provided by the school kitchen. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is supported by the Christian ethos that underpins school life. There are many opportunities for reflection in assembly and discussion time in class groups. Specialist music teaching, high quality art work, and visits, such as the Year 4 trip to London, extend the cultural understanding of the pupils. Practical activities such as raising money for charities and older children baking scones contribute to their future economic well-being. Although pupils feel their views are listened to, there is no school council where they could all be represented and involved in active citizenship.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Overall, the quality of teaching is good but it is better for the older pupils than for the younger ones. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and manage behaviour well. They use an interesting range of resources and methods to help children to learn. For example, Year 6 pupils enjoyed cooking wartime food in order to learn about rationing. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this enables them to clearly explain new things to pupils. However, not all teachers have the specialist knowledge required to teach writing successfully. Younger pupils who are more able are not always given work which is hard enough for them. Computers and the interactive whiteboard are beginning to be used effectively and regularly to enhance learning. Pupils with learning difficulties receive effective support from knowledgeable teaching assistants.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The work pupils do covers all the subjects and areas that it should. All pupils are encouraged to participate fully in the school's activities. Teachers particularly encourage the pupils' creative skills and this is reflected in the good quality of the artwork on display throughout the school. Children speak enthusiastically about their work, especially their trips, their concerts, and the number of clubs that they attend at lunchtimes and after school. Subjects other than English and mathematics are covered well using the topic approach but are not yet assessed systematically enough. Planning and schemes of work for personal, social and health education are not fully in place.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of care provided by the school for pupils is good. Requirements for child protection are in place and whole school training is planned for the future to raise staff awareness further. Staff know the pupils extremely well and genuinely care for the well-being of pupils. They take time to value them as individuals. There are excellent links with the pre-school which ensure that children settle well when they arrive at school. Links with the secondary school are good, with the result that pupils are confident and well prepared to move on. Teachers use good assessment procedures in English and mathematics to check on pupils' learning and to guide their teaching. They mark pupils' work well, showing clear points for improvement. Insufficient use is made of individual targets to help pupils improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher leads the school well. He promotes a caring, family atmosphere in which pupils feel safe and happy. The head and deputy do their jobs efficiently and are developing the ability to use information about pupils' progress to track and improve the performance of individual pupils. There is a good team spirit among the staff and governors who are well motivated and want to do their best by the school and its pupils. The senior teachers and the governors have correctly identified what needs to improve and have the capacity to bring this about. They know that pupils lower down the school could do better. However, the school development plan is not sufficiently detailed and sharply focused on driving up standards. Objectives are not specific and this means senior staff and governors cannot measure how well they are meeting their targets. The school forges strong partnerships with a range of organisations. It welcomes the views of all members of the school community and is involved in local initiatives, which have brought extra resources and training into the school. Accurate evaluation of teaching has taken place. Professional development has been effectively targeted but, due to recent staff changes, the school lacks expertise in literacy. The school budget shows a large under-spend. This is accounted for by the extensive building work to extend facilities for the Reception class which are having

a positive impact on learning. The accommodation is well maintained and provides a stimulating learning environment.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Dear Children and Pupils I enjoyed visiting your school and talking to you and your teachers, and watching you learn. I am sure you would like to know what I thought was good about your school and how it could get even better. What I liked about your school: - You made me feel very welcome in your school and greeted me with a friendly smile. - You all looked very smart in your school uniform. - You are all learning to read and do mathematics very well. - The older pupils do very well in their tests. - You all behave extremely well around the school and help each other as much as you can. - You told me how much you liked coming to school and doing your work. - You have lots of very interesting and active things to do after school and at lunchtimes. - Your teachers and teaching assistants work very hard to make sure that you all get the right sort of support you need to help you learn. - Your parents are right in thinking you go to a good school. What I have asked your school to do now to make it even better: - Give you more help with your writing. - Provide harder work to some of the more able, younger children. - Improve the planning for the future by using the schemes in place. I wish you all the best for the future. Yours sincerely