



# Langley School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 104108  
**Local Authority** Solihull  
**Inspection number** 296242  
**Inspection dates** 4–5 October 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Carol Worthington

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Kineton Green Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Olton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16		Solihull B92 7ER
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 7069771
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	970	<b>Fax number</b>	0121 7068715
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Kenneth Davis
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Valerie Duffy-Cross
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 May 2001		

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
11–16	4–5 October 2006	296242

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Langley School is a comprehensive school with a wide and mixed catchment area; it has two specialist units – one for pupils with specific learning difficulties and the other for pupils with physical disability. The school has had its performing arts status for four years and has recently been invited to take a further specialism in languages. Attainment on entry is broadly average.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school in which standards are high and improving annually because of the headteacher's clarity of vision, very high expectations and relentless pursuit of excellence. There is a vibrant sense of team spirit and healthy competition to exceed the school's challenging targets. Staff and pupils adhere to the school's maxim of 'be the best you can be'. Everyone takes pride in this school. Pupils look smart and behaviour is exemplary. The pupils are well rounded young people who get on well together and with adults; they are delighted by the many opportunities they have. They have a mature attitude to learning and all do well. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make excellent progress. The importance of developing literacy and numeracy throughout the curriculum is paramount, and GCSE results, including English and mathematics, are well above average. Pupils also have well developed information and communication technology (ICT) skills. They are prepared very well to take their place in the next stages of their education and, eventually, work. The school's success as a Performing Arts College is nationally recognised through its work in devising the Young Person's Arts Award, which has now been adopted in schools throughout the country. The on-site Dovehouse Theatre activities are highly valued by the school, local community and acting professionals. This year, the school has been invited to take on another specialism in languages. The school sets great store by developing individual staff and pupils alike, who are given opportunities and training to succeed. This aspect has been recognised by Langley's imminent designation as a training school. Teaching is rigorously monitored and evaluated, and its continuing improvement results in a high percentage of outstanding learning and achievement, although lessons are not always planned to challenge all groups of pupils. Some marking gives pupils insufficient guidance on what they need to do to improve their work. Although pupils learn about healthy lifestyles, many remain reluctant to exercise healthy choices when it comes to ordering lunch.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that lesson planning contains work to challenge pupils of every ability.
- Ensure that all marking gives pupils clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.
- Give pupils more guidance on making better choices of food at lunchtime.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

The latest results for national tests and GCSE examinations in 2006 show that the school's performance was higher than that in 2005, which was itself well above average; pupils in Years 9 and 11 made outstanding progress from their average attainment on entry to the school. High standards have been maintained and improved upon for the last four years in both key stages. Achievement of all pupils is outstanding as a result

of the many challenging and imaginative curriculum opportunities, the high proportion of excellent teaching and pupils' mature attitude to learning. Standards in mathematics are particularly high; many take GCSE in Year 10 and go on in Year 11 to take GCSE in statistics. Pupils may also begin A level mathematics courses in which they also gain high grades. Standards in English and science are also well above average. The school's performing arts status has brought about outstanding achievements in all arts subjects for a large proportion of pupils. Results are very high and seldom below 90% A\*–C grades in drama, art and music. Pupils of higher ability and the gifted and talented also take exam courses in Latin, and critical thinking, in which they do well. These are often taken early in Year 10. A significant number also study separate sciences in which they gain high grades. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make excellent progress towards their targets. They thrive on the high quality of the support provided and their GCSE results this year represent spectacular achievements. Pupils learning English as an additional language do equally well, and some of their achievements are as high as any in the school.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Behaviour is exemplary and makes a major contribution to the calm atmosphere of the school. Pupils' mature attitude to their work and to each other engenders an excellent work ethos. Attendance is above average and pupils enjoy school. They are particularly enthusiastic about the help teachers give them and about the range of opportunities that are offered outside lessons. Many pupils participate in these activities and in projects such as the National Rock & Pop Festival and the original production of 'Swing Kids'. The collaboration of all members of the school and wider community in productions is remarkable. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are proud of their school community and readily take responsibility. They are thoughtful and reflective and show understanding and acceptance of differences in society. Pupils feel safe in school and are very appreciative of the care they receive from adults. Bullying is rare, but pupils know that it is taken seriously and would be dealt with effectively. Pupils show good understanding of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and diet, but some do not find it compelling at lunchtime, when they make some unbalanced choices of food. They participate well in activities of sport, fitness, dance and drama. Pupils have excellent understanding of the world of work and how to prepare for their economic well-being. Literacy, numeracy and ICT are developed to a high standard. Pupils work well as part of a team or joint enterprise. The vocational performing arts GNVQ course covers all areas of arts management as a career.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 1

work. Lessons, often delivered with pace and challenge, impel pupils' creativity and inspire them to enjoy learning. Techniques of questioning which consolidate and extend learning are particularly well developed, and are successful in engaging boys' participation so their achievement is better than in many schools. Drama and art teaching is of a particularly high standard, and the emphasis on facilitating individual learning and expression is strong. In all lessons, very good pupil management, assured subject knowledge, strong mutual respect between teachers and pupils and clear expectations of the pupils' achievement contribute to consistent and secure learning. Regular homework helps pupils build on what they have learned in lessons, and research, often using ICT, prompts pupils to take initiative. Marking is often constructive, but its quality varies between teachers, and does not always give pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work. Lesson planning is good, promoting continuity in learning, but although different learning outcomes are expected, tasks are not always modified to challenge the differing learning needs of individual pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well integrated into mainstream classes. Teachers and teaching assistants have an excellent knowledge of pupils' needs and usually provide work at just the right level to get the best out of them.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy the challenge of an outstanding curriculum that has fully tackled the issues from the last inspection. Statutory requirements are met and the curriculum contains a number of innovative features. 'Funky Friday', in particular, gives Year 7 pupils a breadth of decision-making and group work skills which help them through their school career. Whole-year focus days such as those in careers and business enterprise, relationships education and drugs awareness add a richness and depth to the curriculum and help further develop in pupils the skills of independent learning. The impact of the school's performing arts' status has been clearly felt by pupils, who enjoy the many high quality opportunities and resources, including GNVQ courses and the 'Dovehouse' theatre. Success in performing arts is being disseminated to the all areas of the curriculum not just the modern languages department through initiatives, such as the Year 9 German pantomime project and the teaching of Italian, as part of the school's second specialism. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is outstanding and much improved since the last inspection. The curriculum provides an excellent balance of individual work based on pupils' specific needs and class activities that enable them to flourish alongside other pupils. The school has an extended gifted and talented pupil programme in areas as diverse as critical thinking, Greek and cosmology. The outstanding range of extracurricular activities extends and enhances pupils' learning and is a distinctive feature of the school.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

The quality of care, support and guidance is outstanding. The school has created clear systems of consistent support to meet individual pupils' needs. The school works closely with parents and outside agencies to offer comprehensive, imaginative and innovative support to those pupils who are at risk of underachieving and to prevent any pupils with behavioural difficulties disrupting their own or others' education. Pupils know how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve. They generally have a good idea of their targets, but there is some inconsistency between subjects and individual teachers in the quality of the advice that is given through marking. Pupils with learning difficulties benefit from outstanding care, support and guidance. Their needs are assessed accurately and their progress tracked carefully so they know precisely how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Parents are delighted with this. Auditing of performing arts ensures that the school is able to track the participation of all pupils to encourage the participation of those who are less outward-going. There is a well planned programme of advice on careers and further education. This gives pupils very good understanding of career opportunities, life after school and how to take responsibility for looking after their money. The school makes excellent use of help from outside to offer pupils a wide range of experiences.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The inspiring leadership of the headteacher challenges staff to meet her high but realistic expectations. Senior and middle managers play significant roles in supporting and evaluating school priorities. This creates a vibrant team spirit where everyone is eager to excel. All adults and pupils are expected to do as well as they can and are given the training and opportunity to succeed. This aspect has been recognised in the school's imminent status as a training school. Leadership and management of the provision for the high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are outstanding. The school justifies its high reputation for the quality of the curriculum planning, assessment, teaching and learning for these pupils who make excellent progress as a result. The relentless drive for improvement in all aspects of the school's work is based on a highly effective improvement plan, which takes into account the views of the whole school community, including pupils, governors and parents. The effectiveness of initiatives for improvement are rigorously monitored and evaluated. Significant improvements are evident in teaching and learning, and these have raised standards of achievement. The school regularly meets, and frequently exceeds, its extremely challenging targets. The experienced and very supportive governing body carries out its duties extremely effectively. Financial planning is highly effective because the budget is controlled rigorously by the plans for improvement and monitored efficiently by the staff and governors. The school did not evaluate all aspects of its work as highly as the inspectors.

The school's self-evaluation is nonetheless exceptionally effective because it has resulted in measures being put in place to successfully improve the quality of provision and to raise standards. This, and the very good improvement since the last inspection, shows that the school has excellent capacity to build on its successes and to improve further.



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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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>	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

Thank you very much for being so helpful during the recent inspection of your school. We very much enjoyed our visit and thought your behaviour was excellent throughout. You are polite, well mannered and take a pleasing pride in your appearance. Many of you told us how you enjoy coming to school and think you not only do well in your studies but also have many opportunities to take part in stimulating activities, particularly those in the performing arts. You think it is a safe place to be because older and younger pupils get on well and bullying is not tolerated. We think your school is outstanding. You have an excellent headteacher and a dedicated staff who all work very hard to ensure you do well and that you get plenty of opportunity to 'be the best you can be'. They are constantly finding new ways to improve things, so we do not have many recommendations – only that there could be more challenging tasks in lessons for some of you, and all teachers could be consistent in their marking so that you all have clearer guidance on how to improve your work. We also believe that some of you need to think harder about making choices of healthier food at lunchtimes. We know that you understand what constitutes a healthy diet, but your choices do not reflect this! We wish you well in your future at Langley and beyond.