

# Langford Village Community School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 130962             |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Oxfordshire        |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 315679             |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 21–22 January 2008 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Mike Thompson      |

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>                     | Primary                               |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Community                             |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 3–11                                  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed                                 |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |                                       |
| School                                    | 505                                   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                    |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mr Ian Elkington                      |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Mr John Moffitt                       |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 8 December 2003                       |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Peregrine Way<br>Bicester<br>OX26 6SX |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01869 369021                          |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01869 369854                          |

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|--------------------------|--------------------|
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a large primary school serving the Langford Village estate on the outskirts of Bicester. Its pupils are mostly of White British heritage, and are generally from advantaged home circumstances. The proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. The school has an International Schools Award, which is an accreditation for curriculum-based international work in schools, a Healthy Schools Award, and an Active Mark accreditation for its commitment to promoting physical exercise and school sport.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Langford is a good school. Its pupils achieve well, both academically and in their personal development because they are taught well and the good curriculum helps develop their skills as learners. The vast majority of parents appreciate the many strengths identified by this inspection. One summarised these views well when commenting, 'I am very impressed with the positive atmosphere of the school. There is an excellent team of teachers and teaching assistants. The headteacher is dynamic and committed'.

In previous years, pupils invariably did better in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. However, standards are now rising in Key Stage 2, and are currently above average in most year groups, including Year 6. While bringing about this improvement in Key Stage 2, the management has successfully maintained standards at an above average level overall in Key Stage 1. This better performance at Key Stage 2 is a result of the intense focus placed on improving teaching and learning. However, there is still a significant variation in the quality of teaching provided here. This most often results from the extent to which teachers provide activities at different levels of difficulty to present achievable challenges for all. The consequence is that pupils make better progress in some classes than in others. The well-planned curriculum enables pupils to practise and develop skills of literacy and numeracy across a range of subjects and helps to bring relevance to their learning. It also enables pupils to develop a good awareness of their own cultural heritage. However, the provision in religious education (RE) does not place enough emphasis on major world faiths.

The school acknowledges some previous weaknesses in assessing pupils' attainment. Procedures have been strengthened and assessments are now more reliable. The robust tracking systems now in place provide clear evidence of the good progress made by pupils.

An important contributory factor to the school's effectiveness is the good pastoral care provided. This is an inclusive school in which each child matters. All pupils are warmly welcomed and equally valued. These qualities were succinctly summarised by the parent of a child with learning difficulties who wrote, 'I strongly feel that my child's needs have been taken on board and all the team at Langford have gone out of their way to learn about them and about how they can best provide support.'

The driving force behind the school's success is its good leadership and management at all levels. The headteacher, ably supported by his governors and senior managers, gives a strong lead. The school is not content to rest on its laurels and knows that it could be even better. It has made good progress since its last inspection, and the strong commitment shown to analyse the impact of its work and bring about further improvement leaves it well placed to continue to develop in future years.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The children get off to a good start because of the good teaching and the outstanding curriculum. Lessons are planned well to challenge children and promote their enjoyment of learning. Most children join the Nursery with levels of attainment expected for their age. They make good progress and by the end of their Reception year standards are above average in most areas of learning. All adults carefully observe children's achievements and record them in detail. They then use this information effectively to plan what the children need to do next.

The children are well cared for and settle quickly. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Because of careful evaluation, staff have an accurate understanding of areas that need to improve further. Parents are very happy with their children's progress. One appreciatively commented, 'The staff ensure that learning is fun and accessible to all.'

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

- Ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching, including the marking of pupils' work, at Key Stage 2.
- Place a greater emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of major world faiths.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

In previous years, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were broadly in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. Performance in science was invariably the weakest. In contrast, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were significantly better than the national average in reading and writing, and broadly average in mathematics. The clear course of action taken by senior management has rapidly improved performance in Key Stage 2. Underpinning this is managers' more sophisticated use of data about pupils' attainment in the core subjects. Managers now identify areas of underachievement more precisely than in the past, and therefore target help where it is most needed. This development, allied with improvements in the quality of teaching and the clear framework provided by the curriculum, has resulted in rapid improvements in pupils' progress in Key Stage 2. The improvement in science has been particularly marked, following the appointment of a subject leader, after a period in which there was no science expert on the staff. Pupils with all types of learning difficulties or disabilities make similar progress to their peers. This occurs because of the clear structures provided by teachers to help pupils develop their basic skills, and the good quality help they are given in lessons.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' attitudes to work and behaviour are good, enabling them to learn in a positive atmosphere. Attendance is good because of the efficient procedures and rigorous monitoring of any absence. Pupils contribute very well to their community through the school council, and appreciate the responsibility of helping younger pupils and those new to the school. One newly arrived pupil commented on how friendly everyone is and appreciated the feeling of security provided by the two pupils who were helping her settle in. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. However, their understanding of living in a multifaith society requires improvement. Discussions with pupils showed that they clearly understand the importance of healthy diet, exercise, and keeping safe. Through their good social skills, independence in learning, and good standards of literacy and numeracy, pupils are well prepared for the future.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Improved teaching over the past eighteen months has made a significant difference to pupils' progress and the standards achieved in Key Stage 2. Although teaching here is significantly better than it was, there is room for improvement. Teachers and their skilled teaching assistants use a wide variety of different strategies to maintain momentum in learning, often involving the pupils actively in the introductory tasks or discussions. This makes the learning stimulating and fun. Teachers place a strong emphasis on encouraging pupils to work independently, and balance this with good opportunities for pupils to collaborate with their 'learning partners'.

The school knows that it now needs to build on the improvements already made in teaching to ensure that more lessons are good or better. Currently, the teaching is of variable quality, ranging from outstanding to satisfactory. The key improvement required is in ensuring that in all lessons teachers provide pupils with activities, based around a common theme, that reflect their different levels of ability.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school is rightly proud of its 'seamless' curriculum which makes good links between learning in different subjects and provides pupils with a wide range of interesting activities. An outstanding feature is the International Schools Award, gained for links with schools abroad. Currently, a project on environmental issues, in partnership with a school in Uganda, is heightening pupils' ecological awareness and giving more relevance to their geographical studies. Another noteworthy feature is participation in the Forest Schools initiative, currently enjoyed by pupils in Year 1. This challenges pupils to use their initiative and solve problems within an outdoor environment. Ongoing work to improve provision in science by increasing teachers' subject knowledge and skills in assessing pupils, and by providing better resources, has improved standards. Work to improve provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is also underway. The school does not yet have enough information from assessments in this subject to arrive at a secure view about standards and pupils' progress. Specialist teaching in French is an asset, although the weekly lessons are too long and too infrequent. Enrichment activities, such as instrumental tuition, residential trips, and the use made of the locality, are outstanding features.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

A very small proportion of parents who returned the inspection questionnaires expressed concerns about the quality of care provided. Inspectors looked closely at all aspects of this and find that, overall, the quality of pastoral care is good. Pupils have good reason to feel secure, and say that there is always someone willing to listen if they have a problem. Child protection procedures are securely in place. The good quality care and guidance provided for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities contributes strongly to their good progress. A number of parents commented on this. One, the parent of a pupil with severe learning difficulties, said she was delighted with the support her child receives. The school has good systems for assessing pupils and setting individual targets, and these help to raise standards. Teachers' marking of

pupils' work generally gives the pupils clear guidance about how to improve. However, marking is inconsistent and, in a few instances, pupils' work is not marked.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

High quality teamwork, a clear leadership structure, and the good management of personnel have enabled the headteacher and his senior managers to bring about significant improvements in performance. Nonetheless, senior management recognises that more work has to be done to raise standards further by eliminating the inconsistencies in teaching and learning. Leaders at all levels successfully focus on improving the quality of provision, and have devised clear plans to guide their actions. The school's monitoring of teaching and learning, including the close tracking of pupils' progress, has brought about good improvements. Staff are deployed astutely and provision for professional development is well targeted. Governance is good. Governors are well led, work hard to support the school, have a good understanding of the issues facing it, and are good at holding it to account.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|----------------|

### Overall effectiveness

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2   |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection  | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?   | 2   |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage   | 2   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements   | 2   |

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?          | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?   | 2 |

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 2   |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2   |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards  | 2   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 2   |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can                     | 2   |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money  | 2   |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 2   |
| 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

31 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Langford Village Community School, Bicester, OX26 6SX

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you very much for being so helpful when we came to visit your school. We really enjoyed meeting you, talking to you and looking at your work.

Your parents think that you go to a good school, and we agree. Here is a list of some of the other things we like.

- You make good progress, and the standard of your work is often better than in many other schools. You should be proud of this.
- Everyone in your school is friendly and welcoming, and you behave well.
- Most often, you learn well in lessons because the teaching you are given is good.
- All of the adults in your school make sure that you are well looked after.
- Your headteacher and the other people who help run your school are doing a good job.

We particularly liked all of the exciting activities that your teachers arrange for you, and all of the 'extras' that help make learning fun.

Every school has something that could be better, and this is what we have asked your school to concentrate on to help you to do even better.

- We would like your school to make sure that more of your lessons really make you think hard. I'm sure that you are ready for this challenge!
- We noticed that many of your teachers make really helpful comments when they mark your work. We would like to see this happen in all classes.
- We would also like the school to make sure that you learn more about other religions in the world. We think that this knowledge will be very useful to you as you grow older.

With best wishes for your future success,

Mike Thompson

Lead Inspector