

# Long Wittenham CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123153
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	327858
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 April 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Steven Hill

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	101
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Kate Thompson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Carol Dunne
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 July 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	High Street Abingdon OX14 4QJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01865 407850

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 April 2009
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**Fax number**

**0**

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- pupils' achievement, particularly in writing, and in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- aspects of pupils' personal development
- the school's provision to guide and support pupils' academic progress
- how well the school promotes community cohesion.

Evidence was gathered from observation of lessons; discussions with staff, pupils and governors; the school's documentation; the results of national assessments; samples of pupils' work and questionnaires returned by parents.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were generally accurate, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This is a small village primary school with four mixed-age classes. It provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage of Reception age in a class which also includes a number of pupils from Year 1. Relatively few pupils are entitled to free school meals and all have English as their mother tongue. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly below average. The difficulties involved are varied, but most involve some problems with literacy or numeracy. Almost all pupils are of White British origin, but a number from other backgrounds are on roll, including several with Traveller heritage.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils thoroughly enjoy their work and play and achieve well. Their relationships, with staff and with each other, are particularly good. These, along with the very good provision for pastoral care, underpin pupils' extremely positive attitudes to school. All safeguarding procedures are in place so pupils feel safe and secure in school. Girls and boys of different ages work and play together happily. Older pupils take a pride in helping and supporting younger children, contributing to the excellent provision for children's welfare when they start in Reception. Year 6 pupils summed up this positive ethos, saying, 'Everyone knows everyone else and has friendships with them'. Others agreed, one saying the school was 'like one big family'. Pupils are confident that there is no bullying. Behaviour is good, and Year 6 pupils say it has improved and that on odd occasions when classmates are silly or when younger pupils have arguments, they are quickly sorted out by staff. Pupils have a good knowledge of healthy lifestyles and report that the work of the school council has helped to improve the quality of school meals. They are keen on sport and exercise, and appreciate the way their many outdoor activities compensate for the very restricted space in the school hall. Pupils make a very good contribution to the school community, and to a variety of events in the locality.

Pupils make good progress throughout the school and achieve standards that are above average overall at the end of each key stage. All pupils achieve well, regardless of ability, ethnicity or gender. Standards vary from year to year because of the small numbers in each cohort and pupils' differing abilities and levels of need from year to year. In 2008 the results of national tests in Year 6 were above average and showed that these pupils had made good progress since they were in Year 2. However, although results were exceptionally high in science, and very strong in mathematics, they were only average in English. This was because pupils did not do as well in writing as in other aspects of their work, particularly in reaching the higher Level 5. The school has tackled this issue with vigour over the last year, under the effective leadership of the headteacher and the literacy coordinator. Increased opportunities to write for a variety of meaningful purposes in different subjects have made a strong contribution to the appreciable improvements that have been made. The work in pupils' books, and the school's tracking of pupils' progress, both indicate that this 'gap' has been largely eliminated in the current Year 6 group, with about half of them on track to reach the higher level in all three subjects.

Pupils' achievement is good because of good teaching and an improving curriculum. Classroom management is secure and is based on clear expectations of work and behaviour. Pupils like and respect their teachers and try hard to meet these expectations. They work hard and usually concentrate well, although sometimes a few pupils can be distracted during whole-class sessions. The school is working to make more links between subjects to make learning more meaningful and enjoyable for pupils, a project referred to as the 'creative curriculum'. This is already having a positive effect, so pupils say that lessons are fun, although the school is clear that this process is not yet fully developed. A major strength of lessons is the way in which teachers use assessment information to match work to the needs of individuals and groups. This is based on improving systems for tracking pupils' progress, as well as teachers' good informal knowledge of individuals. Pupils who struggle with their work, or who have particular needs, receive effective extra help from teaching assistants. Good use is made of a range of outside expertise to support such pupils' learning. Parents are very positive about this aspect of provision. More-able pupils are also given suitably challenging work in English, mathematics and science,

and the school is working to see how such challenge can be expanded for those who have particular talents in other areas.

The school has been actively improving its systems to keep track of how well pupils are making progress. Assessments are of good quality, and the school is starting to use materials from a national project to refine them further. However, the headteacher has accurately identified that the different ways assessments are recorded are somewhat cumbersome, so they are not as easy to use as they might be. In particular, they do not easily provide managers with a clear enough view of the overall picture in the school. Staff are working to make the different systems more coherent, and to transfer them to a computer-based system to remedy this issue.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides clear direction to the whole school community so that teachers, other staff and governors work as a coherent team. The work done to arrive at a shared 'Vision' for the school gave this teamwork a very strong foundation. It also helped to consolidate the very good links with parents, who are very positive about the school and the work it does with their children. Good systems are in place to monitor different aspects of provision and effective action is taken to analyse any problems and to put them right. The improvement made to pupils' writing standards is a good example of this. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, support its work energetically, and are well placed to hold it to account by acting as a 'critical friend'. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. It is very effective in promoting cohesion within the school, village and wider local community. However, the headteacher's analysis of need shows that the work done in relation to understanding the wide range of other communities in the United Kingdom and beyond is at a relatively early stage of development. The addressing of this need has been identified as a priority by the headteacher.

The school has built well on the strengths at the last inspection, and its good self-evaluation and strong teamwork mean it is well placed to improve in the future.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children get off to a good start in Reception, making good progress in their learning. The excellent provision for their welfare is exemplified by the very good induction procedures, which parents greatly appreciate. The positive support from older pupils and the extremely good relationships they have with adults mean that children settle into school very happily, join in activities with great enthusiasm, and quickly show high levels of independence, confidence and concentration. They do particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development, and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. A key element in these strengths is the excellent use made of the outdoor area, where children thoroughly enjoy learning in both adult-directed and self-chosen activities. The weekly visits to the 'Forest School' also contribute very strongly to their enjoyment, independence and understanding. Adults are particularly skilled in monitoring how children are getting on, intervening well to challenge them to think carefully about what they are doing, and how they can make improvements. This was a notable feature of a writing session observed, when children showed very high levels of independence and confidence in tackling a task.

The provision is well led and managed. A wide range of interesting activities are provided that engage children's enthusiasm. For example, a group thoroughly enjoyed acting out the story of Jack and the Beanstalk in the outside area, despite the bad weather. Planning is based on regular and systematic observations, so that activities are well matched to children's needs and

interests. The adults have a good understanding of individuals' attainment and their personal needs, and meet these well. Staff are experimenting with different ways of recording assessments but, as in the rest of the school, there is some way to go before the systems give a clear enough overview of children's progress.

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

- Refine assessment systems in line with current plans, so that staff have a clearer view of pupils' progress and so raise standards further.
- Improve the promotion of community cohesion, particularly in helping pupils to understand the wide range of communities in the United Kingdom and beyond.

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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
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### 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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## 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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

08 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Long Wittenham CofE Primary School, Abingdon, OX14 4QJ

Thank you for all your help and your warm welcome when we visited the school. You told us that you think it is a good school, and you are right. These are the most important things we found out.

- You all really enjoy school. Your behaviour is good and you get on very well with each other and with the adults.
- You work hard and are making good progress because the teachers and other adults are good at helping you to learn.
- Children get off to a really good start in Reception. You older pupils play a big part in this because of how you help care for and look after them.
- The school is improving its systems to keep an eye on how you are doing, so that the adults can plan work that is just right for you.
- The adults are good at organising the school and are always keen to improve things.
- You are very involved in the school and the village, so the school is a very happy community.

We have agreed with the headteacher that, to make things even better, the adults are going to concentrate on two things:

- Improve the systems for checking up on your progress, and reorganise how they record the results so they can see more clearly how everyone is doing.
- Help you understand more about people in different communities around this country and across the world.

Thank you once more for all your help. We hope you carry on enjoying school and making good progress.

Yours faithfully

Steven Hill

Lead Inspector