

Long Crendon School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110338
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	310263
Inspection date	29 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Charalambos Loizou

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	208
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	18
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Rebecca Smith
Headteacher	Mrs Teena Thomson
Date of previous school inspection	21 February 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Chilton Road Long Crendon Aylesbury HP18 9BZ
Telephone number	01844 208225
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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 areas:

- the quality of teaching and the curriculum, including the effectiveness of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- achievement and standards, particularly the progress of higher ability pupils
- the extent to which pupils assess and understand their own learning.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, the analysis of test results and assessments of pupils' performance, as well as parents' responses to questionnaires and discussions with pupils, staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Long Crendon is an average size primary school situated in an area of mainly privately owned housing. Reception children join at two points in the school year in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Some join part-time each September and then become full-time in January along with the second cohort of younger four-year-olds. Throughout the school, the vast majority of pupils are White British. A very small number come from minority ethnic backgrounds and none are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is (LDD) is low compared with most schools. Most of these pupils need additional support in lessons and have moderate learning difficulties, and others have specific physical disabilities. There have been substantial staff changes recently, including the appointment of a deputy headteacher who joined at the start of this term. The mobility of pupils joining or leaving the school at different times is quite high.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Long Crendon is an outstanding school. Pupils achieve extremely well, reach high standards and show caring attitudes and excellent behaviour. The school's strong ethos underpins the staff's commitment to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils of all abilities make excellent progress in their academic and personal development. The inclusion of all pupils is reflected in the high quality of care, guidance and support provided by very skilled teachers and teaching assistants. There is a strong sense of community cohesion with excellent partnerships forged between parents, other schools and organisations, as well as the local and wider community.

There is outstanding leadership and management at all levels. The headteacher provides a strong steer and is continually moving the school forward. Together with the staff team and governors, she has guided the school very well since its last inspection. Despite the turnover of staff, standards and teaching have improved very well. The school's modest evaluation of its effectiveness reflects the high expectations of staff and no complacency in their efforts to move the school to even greater heights. Parents have expressed a high level of satisfaction. 'Fantastic school', wrote one, 'All the teachers are very dedicated and caring', and another rightly paid tribute to the staff who she believes are 'excellent and the head makes sure that there is a strong sense of belonging within the school'.

Standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Years 2 and 6 are extremely high and they are well above those expected in information and communication technology (ICT). Outstanding teaching enables pupils to make excellent rates of progress in relation to their starting points right through the school. The staff use excellent assessment and tracking systems to identify how well the pupils are doing in all subjects of the curriculum. Highly skilled teaching assistants provide very effective support for pupils who have learning difficulties because their progress is closely monitored and tracked. Consequently, nearly all of these pupils reach the standards expected for their age. The leadership team and staff ensure that any variation in pupils' performance is picked up quickly so there is no complacency if any pupils are falling behind. This is reflected in the way the staff responded to a slight dip in pupils' performance in science last year. Improvements to planning and extended opportunities for all pupils to investigate and apply their science skills led to an upturn in their performance in the most recent national tests. Consequently, the proportion reaching higher levels improved markedly compared with previous years and compared with last year's national averages, the pupils reached very high standards compared with other schools. Similarly, assessments show that some Year 2 pupils did not reach their expected levels in writing and mathematics last year. High quality teaching and support currently in Year 3 are already showing signs of significant recovery so the pupils are back on track and on course to reach well above average standards by the end of the year.

A well-judged programme of staff training, assessment and curriculum planning have seen improvements to standards and the curriculum, with increasing opportunities for pupils to link skills from different subjects. In many lessons, there are good opportunities for pupils to assess their own learning, although there is still scope to improve. In the most effective lessons, and especially during the lesson plenary, pupils are allowed to explain what they have learned most and which areas they need to improve. In some lessons there are some missed opportunities to extend pupils' understanding by allowing them enough time to reflect on what they have

achieved. Sharp assessments and very effective induction procedures particularly help pupils new to the school to settle quickly.

Throughout the school, an excellent curriculum and outstanding teaching provide a rich programme of activities and lessons that pupils enjoy and are of enormous benefit to their personal and academic development. Extra-curricular activities and lessons provide outstanding opportunities for pupils to take part in music, drama, dance and sport, or to learn another language such as French. Pupils thrive on the wide range of educational and residential visits that successfully develop social and team-building skills. The school's curriculum successfully broadens pupils' interests, 'Our teachers make it really fun', says one pupil, confirming the views of many, and their enjoyment of school is also reflected in high rates of attendance. The school helps pupils to support the wider community through fund raising and improving the local environment, for example, when pupils designed the outdoor areas and gardens. They extend their knowledge of other cultures, world religions, festivals and customs when studying Hinduism and Judaism, and these are reinforced by visits to places of worship such as the recent visit to a synagogue. Strong partnerships and links with the local church and village, as well as the wider urban community, enhance the work that pupils do in lessons. Pupils in Year 1, for example, are busy preparing to make a film and writing stories in their English lessons using finger puppets. They are excited because they are going to perform this for Reception children. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have used the recent Olympic games in China as a stimulus to organise and prepare their own 'Mini-Olympics' involving medal ceremonies, special reports written as news items and themed days where pupils, parents and the whole community come together for special sports events and activities. Older pupils used their ICT and mathematics skills very well to prepare reports and charts of the number and category of medals won by each nation. Road safety, healthy lunches, ECO projects and the national Active Mark award demonstrate the pupils' excellent understanding of how to stay healthy and safe.

Governors are highly effective and a real asset. Together with the leadership team and staff they seek parents' views and keep them very well informed. Pupils' views are sought and their involvement as school councillors, house captains and playground buddies enables them to play a full part in the development of the school. The school's capacity to keep on improving is excellent.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The children develop their confidence, self-esteem and communication skills very well and the overall EYFS provision is exceptionally well managed. Children in the EYFS join the school with skills and abilities that are above those expected of four and five-year-olds. They make rapid progress towards the learning goals expected because the teaching and quality of care and support are highly effective. Most of the EYFS children exceed the standards expected of five-year-olds in all areas of learning and are working comfortably within the early stages of the curriculum for Year 1 well before they leave the Reception year. Children thoroughly enjoy indoor and outdoor activities, such as the challenges of designing a house using large building blocks. They improvise and take the task seriously as they use metre rulers as spirit levels to, as one child put it, 'Make sure it is straight, and then we can put the roof on.' The staff are very good at helping the children to develop early reading, writing, problem solving, reasoning and numeracy skills. They incorporate interesting tasks for the children to engage in, such as fishing out letters from the water tray to spell their names, so reinforcing their knowledge of letter sounds and extending their reading skills. Excellent assessments of children's progress,

performance and welfare are maintained and these help to inform parents how well their children are doing. There is scope to develop more opportunities for the children to reflect on their learning and to improve questioning so that it continually challenges and extends the children's thinking.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that in all lessons pupils have more opportunities to reflect on and assess their own learning.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

09 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Long Crendon School, Aylesbury, HP18 9BZ

The inspectors were very pleased to visit your school. You made us feel very welcome. Yours is an outstanding school. You all work very hard with your teachers and I agree with the many parents who say that your school is an excellent place to learn and play. Your artwork is fantastic and we were very impressed with the numerous awards for a range of things like music, sport, dance and drama, well done. There are many good things about your school so it is hard for us to pick out the very best. However, these are just a few of the ones we were pleased with most:

- you are extremely well behaved, polite and considerate
- I agree with you when you say your teachers are brilliant because they are helping you to reach high standards
- you enjoy school and I can see why; there are lots of things to do, even after school
- the inspector who visited really enjoyed the assembly and your singing
- we were very impressed with the school council and how it helps to improve the school; the councillors have come up with some great ideas
- your parents are very pleased with you and your teachers and the school works very closely with them
- the staff take excellent care of you and make sure you are all safe and happy
- the headteacher, staff and governors manage the school extremely well and work hard to keep looking for ways to make the school even better.

I have asked your teachers to:

- give you more opportunities in lessons to explain how well you are doing and to decide which things you learned most and the areas you would like to learn more about.

Well done, keep trying hard and helping your school to even greater things. We wish you all the very best.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou

Lead Inspector