



## **SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE**

# **INSPECTION REPORT FOR LONG CLOSE SCHOOL**

**DfE No: 871/6001**

### **The key inspection judgements for this school are:**

<b>The quality of education</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' personal development</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>Safeguarding pupils' welfare health and safety</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership, management and governance</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>Effectiveness of the Early Years' provision</b>		<b>1</b>

### **Compliance with the Independent School Standards:**

The school meets the regulatory requirements of schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

### **Compliance with the Equality Act 2010:**

The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act.

### **Compliance with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage:**

The school meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

**Date of inspection: 13-15 October 2015**

## **SECTION A: SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS**

This is a happy school where pupils of all ages thrive and make excellent progress. The school meets its aims well. The very good progress made by pupils of all abilities is reflected in the latest GCSE results which show that at the end of Key Stage 4 all pupils gained 5 GCSE grades A\* - C and 87% gained 5 GCSE grades A\* - C, including English and mathematics. Children of all ages say that they are happy to be at the school and parents agree with them. The quality of education, including the curriculum and teaching and assessment, is of outstanding quality. Pupils' personal development is outstanding and the range of faiths of pupils celebrated is a strength of the school. The school upholds successfully the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs within its mutually supportive multi-cultural community. The quality of safeguarding and pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. Pupils say that they feel safe and strategies for safeguarding are secure. The quality of leadership, management and governance is excellent. Strategies for monitoring and review are of high quality. The school meets all the independent school standards.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:**

Whilst not required by the regulations, the proprietor should:

- improve the consistency of marking and assessment, based on the excellent examples that already exist in the school, and involve pupils more frequently in assessing their own work; and
- develop the current personal, social, health and emotional education (PSHEE) programme as planned.

## **SECTION B: INFORMATION**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION:**

This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service (SIS) in accordance with Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. It follows the inspection framework agreed by SIS and the Department for Education (DfE).

In reaching their judgements, the inspectors observed lessons in various subjects for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and in the preparatory and senior parts of the school. They examined samples of the work of pupils of all ages and observed daily life in the school, including at break and lunchtimes. The inspectors analysed the school's documents and records as well as the school's website. They held discussions with staff, including those with management and leadership roles. They took account of the responses of parents and pupils provided in questionnaires completed before the inspection, and whilst in school had discussions with groups of pupils representing Key Stages 2, 3 and 4.

The inspectors were:

Reporting Inspector:	Mr Mike Thirkell
Team inspectors:	Mr Peter Jones Mrs Christine Jones Mrs Anne McConway

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Long Close is a multi-cultural co-educational, independent day school for boys and girls aged 2-16. It is situated on an attractive suburban site between Slough in and Datchet in Berkshire. Founded in 1940, it has been in its present location since 1942, and became part of the Cognita group of schools in 2004. Long Close describes itself as a family through school, offering nursery to secondary provision. It has a faith based ethos, underpinned by Christian values. Currently there are 289 pupils at the school of whom 29 attend the nursery part-time. Of these, thirteen are aged between two and three and sixteen aged between three and five. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs although the school has identified twenty pupils who require additional support as they have varying degrees of special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). Twenty seven pupils require a degree of support for English as a foreign language (EFL). Thirty four pupils have been identified as able, gifted or talented (AG&T). The school's aim is 'to inspire pupils through the creation of an inspirational learning environment in which teachers foster a culture of outstanding academic achievement. We place the pupils at the heart of everything we do and value them as part of the Long Close Family'.

# **SECTION C: THE INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS**

## **1. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

### **The quality of the curriculum**

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding throughout the school, including in the EYFS. The curriculum, which reflects the school's aims and ethos, is broad, balanced and innovative. It is supported by a curriculum policy and detailed schemes of work for each subject area and age range of pupils in the school. Parents receive a helpful range of information relating to the content of the curriculum at each stage of development through the prospectus and through the school's detailed and accessible website. The curriculum is guided by the National Curriculum but is not restricted by it. Strong and highly successful emphasis is placed upon ensuring that pupils enjoy learning through the range of subjects.

The detail and thoroughness of the long and short term curriculum planning is reflected in the high quality of lesson plans. The clarity of planning at all levels supports the school's monitoring and review procedures well. As a result of high quality planning, lessons are interesting and this is reflected in all pupils' showing high levels of interest in learning. The school's strategic plans recognise the need to keep the curriculum under constant review and modification and to ensure that it meets the needs of pupils of all ages, abilities and aptitudes, including pupils identified by the school as having SEND and those who are identified as AG&T. The school is clear about how the current high level of provision could be further improved, through for example extending facilities to enable pupils access a wider range of materials and processes in design and technology.

The curriculum is planned creatively. For example, in Year 2 a highly imaginative and innovative approach to planning linked pupils' lessons to the life of Florence Nightingale through indoor and outdoor activities, achieved through a 'collapsing' of the normal timetable. All pupils in the primary school learn Spanish from Year 1. In Years 10 and 11 pupils have a core curriculum which ensures a breath of study, supported by a good range of options relative to the size of the school. In planning provision for this age group school management places a high priority to meeting the needs of individual pupils' abilities and aptitudes. Art is provided for all pupils and music up to Year 9. A high proportion of pupils in the school are learning to play individual musical instruments. The curriculum is enriched by a notably high number of school visits and trips, such as to Bletchley Park and through learning about the development of British institutions in history lessons.

Provision for SEND is of high quality supported by excellent records which are used effectively to monitor progress and learning need. Effective links are

established between the lead teacher for SEND and classroom teachers. AG&T pupils are suitably identified and the school clearly understands national expectations with respect to these pupils. An appropriate range of activities and visits increases opportunities for intellectual challenge for these pupils. Though the school identifies a number of pupils as requiring differing degrees of EFL support, the high standards of pupils' literacy, numeracy, speaking and listening skills relative to their abilities throughout the school provides a measure of the success of support provided in meeting this need.

### **The quality of teaching and assessment**

The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding. Teaching is of consistently high quality. The high expectations that staff have of pupils along with the high expectations that pupils have of themselves create a thirst for learning that permeates all aspects of the school's work. Teachers have a thorough understanding of the subjects and topics they teach and are skilful in using a variety of methodologies to suit pupils' different ways of learning. Lesson plans meet the needs of pupils of different abilities effectively. Intervention to support pupils at risk of underachievement is prompt and effective and helps them to maintain a good rate of progress. For example, in a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson a strong focus on the needs of all pupils supported those who were struggling and helped to reinforce and consolidate their measuring skills. Lessons ensure a mix of activities that sustain pupils' concentration, interest and involvement. Pupils are enthusiastic, keen to learn and invariably behave well, whether working independently or in groups. They show that they are committed to improving their work and many show that they want to discover new things, using any opportunity to develop their learning. Teachers are skilled in using probing questions to draw out pupils' understanding, giving appropriate time for pupils to think about and organise their answers.

Assessment is outstanding overall. Their exercise books demonstrate the progress made by pupils of all abilities in all year groups, supported by extensive and thorough marking and helpful comments. Pupils are very clear that they know exactly how well they are doing and what standards they are reaching. A key focus of marking is on ensuring task completion and correction. In the best examples, for example in religious studies, the marking is an integral part of the pupils' work as it develops a dialogue with the pupil that enhances and develops learning. However, the school is aware that the overall high quality of written feedback shows some inconsistency and that occasionally there is too limited evidence of the involvement of pupils in the assessment of their own work to develop their skills as independent learners.

Effective systems for tracking progress are well established, understood and used to good effect to highlight individual progress as each pupil progresses through the school. The process is supported by regular testing and

assessments. The outcomes of tests are moderated internally to ensure consistency and accuracy up to Year 5 and from Year 6 external moderation is used to confirm that the outcomes can be used to set an accurate baseline for Key Stages 3 and 4. Performance from previous years is used well to set current performance targets and as a result staff have a good view of progress as well as likely outcomes. This is particularly strong in Key Stages 1 and 2 where the pupils' starting points are determined using an external testing system.

### **Pupils' learning and achievement**

Details provided by the school relating to pupil academic performance shows that pupils of all abilities make very good progress. The most recent GCSE results show that at the end of Key Stage 4 all pupils gained 5 GCSE grades A\* - C and 87% gained 5 GCSE grades A\* - C, including English and mathematics. The high achievements of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 continues an improving trend over previous years and are well above national levels, especially for the high numbers of pupils gaining the higher A/A\* grades. Analysis of the performance of these Year 11 pupils shows that they made very good progress relative to their abilities. In Key Stage 1 and 2 progress and outcomes are similarly very good. Outcomes in Year 6 for in English and mathematics show that pupils made very good progress that is well above both local and national levels. In other year groups progress continues to be well above average and shows that pupils are on course to reach similar high standards.

## **2. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The personal development of the pupils is excellent and promoted through a strong ethos and determination that they will develop well judged values and attitudes. The school's provision is based successfully on the principal of 'mutual respect' between all the members of the community and a clear code of conduct applies to all. This open culture creates excellent relationships between adults and pupils and fosters a positive environment for learning to take place. The school has been careful to select staff who support this approach to ensure relationships remain strong. Parents agree that the school helps their children develop mature, sensible attitudes and values, alongside good manners and social skills and that they are happy. Pupils are confident and self-assured learners who understand the importance of their education and their positive attitudes mean they really enjoy learning and look forward to each new day in school. They are proud of their school and know it will help them to achieve the best they can. The school upholds successfully the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs within its mutually supportive multi-cultural community. This is achieved through developing pupils' awareness of one another's faiths through assemblies and the celebration of one another's festivals. The qualities of mutual respect and tolerance are embedded in the

school and its curriculum to a high level as well through enrichment and extension activities

Behaviour around school and in lessons is excellent and reflects the school's high expectations of the pupils. They are taught to be self disciplined and to take responsibility for their own actions, a key factor in promoting the supportive atmosphere that exists in the school. This has a positive impact on their moral development. Pupils are adamant they feel safe at all times in the school. Bullying is not seen as a significant problem by either pupils or their parents. Pupils agree that any rare instances of bullying or poor behaviour are dealt with promptly and effectively by the school. They are clear that there is always someone they can turn to in the school if they have a problem and need help. They understand that any form of derogatory language is completely unacceptable and would not be tolerated. Similarly, they express no patience with on-line or prejudiced based bullying. Attendance is good and pupils rarely late for lessons. They express appreciation of their teachers and say that their teachers work hard to make their lessons interesting.

Pupils are encouraged to be self-reflective about their own beliefs as well as having respect for other people's faiths, feelings and values. They nevertheless are willing to present their own opinions and to argue their point of view, for example in Year 10 religious studies (RS) in a discussion about faith. Social development is enhanced by the multi-cultural nature of the school as pupils are very used to working and socialising with pupils from different faiths and cultural backgrounds. They co-operate well together and are eager to participate in community and extra-curricular activities. The wide range of extra-curricular activities provided is well attended and the school is always on the lookout for new ideas, such as the recently introduced philosophy sessions.

The school ensures a progressive learning experience for PSHEE through timetabled lessons, specialist subject trips and visitors to the school. Careers education is carefully planned supported by a specialist company that visits the school to provide guidance to pupils in reviewing their future pathways. The provision is supported by attending careers conventions and in Year 10 by a week of work experience. The school is clear about its responsibility to make pupils aware of opportunities linked to apprenticeships as well as university. Year 11 pupils expressed satisfaction with this aspect of the careers provision and that they thought that this was important.

Pupils have good links with the local and wider community. They are involved enthusiastically in voluntary work through in a wide range of charitable activities. For example, a large number of harvest festival food parcels collected by the pupils are currently awaiting delivery in the local area. An annual art competition is run by the 'Bridging Gaps Fostering Agency' is promoted by a fostering agency, which then comes into school to present their prizes with children and

carers from the agency. Through their lessons, regular school trips which enhance their learning experience, they develop a good fundamental understanding of British values and have the skills and attitudes that will allow them to contribute and participate fully to life in modern Britain.

### **3. SAFEGUARDING PUPILS' WELFARE, HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. The school is vigilant in its approach to safeguarding and to ensuring that pupils feel safe. Policies and procedures for safeguarding are of high quality and meet all relevant standards. Training ensures staff are enabled to identify when a pupil may be at risk of neglect, abuse or exploitation and know how to report concerns should it be necessary. Documentation and record-keeping are thorough and up to date, following the most recent government guidance. This reflects the care and attention to detail that staff give to safeguarding, supported by the involvement of an independent person appointed by Cognita to monitor safeguarding in the school.

The member of staff designated as the safeguarding lead maintains careful records of child protection concerns, following these up promptly and effectively, and has worked hard to liaise with the local authority over cases which require attention. The school has suitable anti-bullying and behaviour policies which are implemented appropriately. Parents agree that they consider their children to be safe at school. Pupils are given a very good understanding of how to stay safe, for example, through instruction on e-safety which includes the safe use of the internet and social media, and they say that they feel safe in the school. They say that they are clear about who they should turn to in school if they have worries or concerns and they are well aware of the identity of the designated safeguarding staff.

The school takes care to ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves healthy. It provides well-chosen and healthy school meals, and packed lunches are not permitted. Fitness is strongly promoted through good provision of physical education and games throughout the school. Support for emotional and mental well-being is provided by the positive and supportive ethos of the school and through discussion of relationships in PSHEE. This provision raises pupils' awareness of the dangers of abuse, sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism. The school is clear about what it needs to do if it suspects that pupils are vulnerable to these issues.

The school's arrangements for staff recruitment and vetting meet the standards, and the relevant records and files, including the Single Central Register, are in good order. It has a suitable policy for risk assessments, including activities outside school, which are completed regularly and acted on as necessary. Fire

precautions are carefully organized, with staff training and regular fire drills, as well as checks on emergency routes, fire detection and fire fighting equipment. Arrangements for First Aid are effective, with suitable training given to staff and appropriate facilities in place. Good arrangements are made for the supervision of pupils, including at breaks and lunchtimes. The school uses reasonable and fair sanctions as necessary, and a record is retained of sanctions imposed. Medical facilities support the schools good provision for First Aid. Attendance and admissions registers are scrupulously maintained.

#### **4. LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE**

The quality of leadership, management and governance of the school is outstanding. All those involved in the leadership and management of the school demonstrate the skills and knowledge appropriate to their roles and they are ably led by the headmaster. Leaders, managers and staff work together effectively supported by clear management structures which ensures that roles are specified and that all members of staff are able to contribute to the schools' ongoing review and development. This is supported by regular meetings of management and of staff. A key aim for leadership and management is to ensure that school staff feel a sense of ownership in the school and its developments.

Leadership and management, with the valued support of the parent company, has ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards as required by the DfE. It insures that pupils have outstanding opportunities to learn and that the well-being of pupils is promoted effectively. Pupil welfare is on the agenda at every staff and senior management meeting. Leadership and management keep all aspects of the school's provision under ongoing evaluation through a structured system of monitoring and review. This is a notably strong feature of the school.

Leadership and management have a clear and informed vision for the development of the school. This is reflected in effective strategic and improvement planning documents. These confirm that schools' leadership and management know well the school's strengths, in addition to the areas that require further development. The school's accommodation and premises are safe and secure, and contribute effectively to the well-being of the pupils. The quality of maintenance is consistently good. Leaders and managers in the school demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the independent school requirements. They ensure that the school communicates with parents regularly and effectively in a number of ways. School reports to parents about the progress of their children are of high quality and frequent. Parents are provided with appropriate information about the procedures for making complaints.

## **Governance**

Systems for governance are effective. There is a clear and effective structure for governance of the school supported by strong links between the school leadership and management and representatives of the parent company Cognita. The school appreciates the quality of unobtrusive support, challenge and advice provided by the parent company. An independent person appointed by Cognita has oversight of all safeguarding matters. Similar support is provided in relation to health and safety and there is appropriately appointed external chair of the education committee. Frequent meetings between the school leadership and management and the parent company ensures the maintenance of a positive oversight of the school's developments.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS' PROVISION**

In this outstanding setting all children make outstanding progress in their learning and development relative to their starting points and are exceedingly well prepared for the next stage of their education. The setting meets the needs of the range of children, including those who have SEND, exceptionally well. Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding which leads to outstanding achievement. The children's personal and emotional development is excellent. They are highly motivated, very eager to join in and are effective learners. Staff have a thorough understanding of their duties and responsibilities for protecting children and the requirements for safeguarding and welfare are fully met. The strength of the partnership with parents and respect for parental contributions are significant factors in making this an outstanding setting. Leadership and management are committed to the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of the provision. In this they are successful and also create a secure, happy learning environment.

Leadership and management are outstanding. This is achieved and maintained through the effective continuous professional development of staff, performance management, supervision and peer observations. The robust ongoing self-evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of the provision and outcomes, through use of the Bristol Standards, which takes into account the views of parents and children, provides for sustainable improvement. Planning is thorough, appropriate to the age groups and takes full account of the diverse needs and interests of the children. Staff actively promote British values, equality and diversity through wide ranging themes. Robust systems are in place and effectively implemented to protect children and thereby meeting all statutory and other government requirements.

The outstanding teaching, learning and assessment enable staff to have excellent relationships with the children, and promote outstanding achievement. They offer praise and support childrens' learning where necessary using a range of languages. Assessment is effective and consistently used to plan teaching. This enables all children to make sustained and outstanding progress. The high quality of information for parents, outstanding guidance on how their children are progressing, and regular engagement with them ensures an outstanding partnership. The provision for children with SEND is exceptionally good due to the close monitoring of the progress of each child. The high-quality teaching enables children to acquire the skills for effective learning in readiness for the next stages in their learning.

Overall the personal development, behaviour and welfare of the children are outstanding. Staff provide children with a sense of achievement through timely praise consistently well. Children are confident and enjoy their learning as they develop their independence, explore their surroundings and use their imagination. Staff are outstanding in the provision they make to support the social and emotional preparation for children's transition within the setting and to Reception classes. Children are given emotional security through the well planned key person system. Attendance is closely monitored to promote the well-being of the children. The children behave well as they learn to manage their own feelings and develop relationships with each other. Staff ensure that children are developing knowledge of how to keep themselves healthy through exercising in the spacious playgrounds and eating healthy foods at snack time. Wide-ranging cultural experiences are planned well to enable them to contribute to wider society and life in Britain today. They feel safe in this caring and stimulating environment, are secure in their relationships and are happy to play.

Thorough, consistent recording and monitoring of achievement shows that all children make outstanding progress from their different starting points. Most children meet or exceed the level of development that is typical for their age. This enables them to move to the next stage of their education with confidence.

## SECTION A: INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Name of School	LONG CLOSE SCHOOL			
Address of school:	Upton Court Road Slough Berkshire, SL3 7LU			
Telephone number:	01753 520095			
Email address:	<a href="mailto:info@longcloseschool.co.uk">info@longcloseschool.co.uk</a>			
Web address	<a href="http://www.longcloseschool.co.uk">www.longcloseschool.co.uk</a>			
Proprietor:	Cognita Schools			
Person registered with DfE as proprietor under paragraph 20 of Part 4:	N/A			
Head Teacher:	Mr Brendan Pavey			
Early Years Manager	Mrs Sarah Harris			
DfE Number	871/6001			
Type of school	Independent school			
Annual fees	£2,520.00 - £4,380.00 per term			
Age range of pupils	2-16			
Gender of pupils	Male/Female			
Total number on roll	full-time	260	part-time	29
Number of children in registered nursery	46 in total			
Number of children under-5	Boys:	42	Girls:	28
Number of compulsory school age pupils	Boys:	136	Girls:	83
Number of post-compulsory pupils	Boys:	0	Girls:	0
Number of pupils with statements of special educational need	Boys:	0	Girls:	0
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	Boys:	13	Girls:	14
Type of inspection	Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008			

**This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service, which provides independent professional inspection of all schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust, and members of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship or Cognita group. The report is available from the School Inspection Service website: [www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk](http://www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk).**