

# Longwill A Primary School for Deaf Children

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103603
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	336111
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Susan Lewis

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>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	49
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Robin Caley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Babs Day
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	Bell Hill Northfield Birmingham
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 475 3923
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. All teachers were observed during the nine lessons seen. Meetings were held with staff, governors, some of those working in partnership with the school and groups of pupils. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at much of the school's documentation, including school development planning, curriculum planning, minutes of governing body minutes and information relating to how the school checks on pupils' progress. Twenty two parents' questionnaires were analysed, as well as thirty two from staff and twenty from pupils.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. The following were looked at in detail:

- the quality of teaching and learning in lessons and particularly how the school has supported the learning in classes taught by teachers new to teaching children who are deaf
- how the school is working to raise attendance
- how the school is equipping the pupils for life in a multicultural world.

## Information about the school

This is a small special school which caters for pupils, with severe or profound hearing loss. A sign bi-lingual approach is used. This encompasses British Sign Language (BSL) and English and supports pupils' communication and learning. An increasing proportion of pupils, currently over 40%, also have additional learning needs such as autism, emotional and behavioural difficulties and/or severe or moderate learning difficulties. A few also have complex medical and physical needs. The large majority of pupils come from backgrounds where their home language is not English and enter the school with little or no English. Nine different languages are used by families, including British Sign Language. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Pupils come from Birmingham and neighbouring West Midlands local authorities and a very high percentage are eligible for free school meals.

The school had a number of unqualified teachers or teachers of the deaf in training and some long-term staff absence at the time of the inspection. It has extensive accolades for its work including Basic Skills Mark, Healthy Schools status and teaching awards for individual teachers.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

### Main findings

'This school has transformed my child's life and future and my family's; it gave us back a vision and hope', said one parent. Pupils and other parents agree saying 'everything about it is excellent'. Staff and the pupils are proud to be part of this school and all its achievements, and rightly so. Longwill has maintained its status as an outstanding school and has improved its work further. There have been many innovative curricular developments such as the work with the City Learning Centre and as a Forest School, as well as imaginative ways of working with families; all to the great benefit of pupils' learning and well-being. The excellent leadership team rigorously evaluates pupils' achievements and constantly challenges itself to do better. The team analyses its results very carefully for individuals, subjects and for groups; puts carefully planned interventions into place; and then checks for improvement are made. As a result, pupils of all ages and backgrounds, including those who have additional learning needs make outstanding progress overall.

Outcomes are excellent. This is particularly so in pupils' personal development, their attitudes and skills for learning and in their communication through British Sign Language (BSL), and in almost all subjects. Good teaching and skilled use of BSL really supports pupils' knowledge and understanding in different subjects. Tailoring of different forms of communication for different purposes and for individual pupils challenges each at their own level. An outstanding curriculum rightly prioritises pupils' basic skills and understandings. The current emphasis on writing and on English skills, through such initiatives as visual phonics, an increased emphasis on audiology and listening and stronger partnerships with specialists such as cochlear implant and audiology centres are all beginning to raise attainment and accelerate progress in these more challenging areas for pupils. There is an exciting range of clubs, visits, visitors, and partnerships with mainstream schools. Valuable learning opportunities along themes help pupils to practically apply their skills, to achieve, and often exceed, their targets and to communicate with and be included within a wider community.

High-quality induction and the very strong emphasis on assessment and monitoring mean that despite the relatively high percentage of inexperienced or unqualified teachers of the deaf, teaching is good overall and has some outstanding features. Senior and more experienced staff model outstanding practice extremely well and give strong constructive feedback to help other teachers meet pupils' needs even more effectively. Teaching assistants too, are extremely well deployed so that class teams are effective at supporting learning. Sometimes, however, a few teachers do not refer often enough to lesson objectives and individual pupils' targets so that pupils themselves are not always clear about what they are meant to achieve or have achieved.

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Pupils thrive within a nurturing, caring atmosphere that challenges them to do their best and to persevere. They say that the school makes you 'believe you can do anything' and 'helps us to get better at our work'. They are inspired to be really ambitious for themselves in their learning. Their understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe is excellent, as is their behaviour. Older pupils model this extremely well for younger children who quickly settle into the nursery. Pupils work well together and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, as is the contribution they make to their own learning, to the life of the school and the wider community. This is a strongly harmonious community in which mutual respect and tolerance is both taught and modelled by staff and demonstrated by pupils. Pupils are extremely well prepared for life in a multicultural society and world, making effective contributions already through their charity work and opportunities offered through the outstanding partnerships with other schools and community groups. An exceptional personal, social, health and citizenship education programme, including Deaf Studies, underpins this. Attendance is satisfactory, but improving. Pupils often have medical or audiology needs that take them out of school. Overall pupils are very well prepared for the world of work and next steps in their education and life because of the strong work ethos and attitudes and the support for key skills.

The headteacher, governing body and senior team provide extremely effective leadership with vision and drive that ensures continual improvement. Self-evaluation is rigorous. Excellent capacity to improve further is demonstrated by the school's many achievements to date including ways in which it has so quickly enabled its less experienced staff to understand and provide effectively for pupils' learning.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve the teaching and learning in lessons by
  - Ensuring that teachers more consistently refer to learning objectives both for groups and individual in lessons so that pupils are clear about what they are expected to do, what they are learning and why.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****1**

Pupils really enjoy coming to school. They say their lessons are fun and they know they are learning. They like it that 'everyone can sign' and that the school helps 'my mum and dad to learn to sign too'. The considerable progress pupils make from usually very low starting points is linked to excellent provision but also the ways in which the school really involves families in their children's learning. This includes the special classes they run, such as those at Birmingham Football Club or the joint lessons with their children in school. Pupils whose home language is not English or British Sign Language make excellent progress, because the school personalises and tracks the learning of everyone and home-link staff work with parents and interpret for them, so they too can join in. Attainment overall remains very low, however, because so many pupils have additional learning needs in addition to their hearing loss or arrive at the school late with very

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limited communication.

Almost all Nursery children have very significant delays in their communication and other areas of learning on entry; some individuals have more fluent skills already in BSL and more age appropriate skills. All pupils make exceptional and often swift progress in their communication skills in BSL. They make outstanding progress from their starting points in science and in mathematics, particularly in their number skills. A focus on problem-solving throughout the school is accelerating progress in this area even more. Although most pupils' English skills remain very low, individual pupils in each year group demonstrate skills closer to those expected for their age. This is particularly the case in reading, where there is systematic support and targeted intervention programmes where necessary. Initiatives in writing have not yet had time to have an impact but pupils already write more freely and with enthusiasm. Pupils with additional learning needs make similarly excellent progress because the school works highly effectively with visiting specialists to put special programmes and resources in place and because the learning for all pupils is so closely tailored to their needs.

The school's data shows that almost every pupil makes above or well above the expected progress, when their starting points in English, mathematics and science are taken into account. Their understanding and learning in other subjects is also excellent, such as information and communication technology, which they use with confidence. This was shown when, in a Year 4 group lesson on the life of Anne Frank, pupils used software to import data for a presentation. Pupils' personal and social development is outstanding and reflected in their excellent relationships behaviour and attitudes, their confidence when trying out tasks and their empathy for others. This is a strength of the school and supports pupils becoming effective citizens very well.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

\* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	<b>1</b>
	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Provision is highly effective in meeting pupils' needs. Teaching is good because teachers plan carefully and the information that they have about pupils' levels and needs is used very well indeed to inform this. All staff have a high level of competence in the use of BSL and this gives them confidence in communicating with and developing pupils' learning. Teaching is lively with excellent use of resources such as interactive whiteboards and a strong practical element. This enables teachers to evaluate pupils' understanding of what they are learning as well as support those pupils with weaker language skills in their learning. Relationships are excellent and pupils feel confident to have a go and be ambitious in their learning; this is because they know their teachers believe in their ability. All adult support is well targeted both to make pupils' think and to extend their understanding. Independence is crucial and nothing is done for these pupils that they can do for themselves. The excellent extension of learning into the home through the technology project with the City Learning Centre strengthens pupils' learning further. The range of curriculum opportunities they have fire their imagination and excite their curiosity; they know that adults will take the time to explain. Visits and real experiences such as considering the different options for spending money they have raised, or different quotations for playground improvements both enhance their learning and enthuse them further.

The exceptional level of care, support and guidance is very much valued by families and by pupils who say 'Everyone is kind and helps us in this school.' Arrangements for involving parents and pupils in reviewing and understanding their child's progress are excellent. The school works hard to ensure pupils have access to all the other resources they need and there are excellent examples of partnership working to support the well-being of the most vulnerable children. Excellent relationships are in place with the Children and Adults Mental Health team for deaf children, for example, that really support pupils' well-being.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>2</b>
	1

<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The school is led highly effectively by a visionary senior leadership team and governors who are determined to drive pupils' achievements higher and secure their well being. This is represented in everything they do. Whole staff vision days enable everyone to feel involved. Innovative projects with local partners keep the school at the cutting edge of new approaches to supporting learning that they have then trained others to use nationally. Rigorous analysis of data and reviews of pupils' achievement drives interventions and informs teaching and learning so that it is led exceptionally well. All this is supported extremely well by a governing body that supports but questions, and expects to be shown, what differences their initiatives are making. The school's excellent safeguarding arrangements are reflected in both their detailed attention to procedures and the number of highly-trained staff they have, the quality of risk assessments and the ways in which they empower pupils to speak out and know they will be listened to. The excellent use of and work with partners secures this further. Community cohesion is good. A strong policy and plan are in place and a huge range of activities within the school and outside such as the work to support a school for the deaf in Gambia and many projects with other schools. The impact of such work on pupils' attitudes and understanding in Longwill and in some other schools and groups is very strong but there is less formal evidence of the impact of the broader work that it does.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>



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## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children have a flying start to their life in school because the teaching and support provided in the Early years Foundation Stage is excellent. The provision for them in Nursery and Reception is highly focused on their needs and on what skills will make most difference to them. Consequently, they make excellent progress in all areas of their learning. This is particularly so in their personal and social development, their ability to communicate through BSL and in some elements of their early literacy and numeracy skills. Examples include counting skills, recognition of shape, attitudes to stories and interest in and use of books. Children really enjoy their learning and trust their teachers because there is such careful attention to their needs and well being.

There is a good balance of teacher led and child led activity, although the Foundation Stage staff are exploring how they could increase this even more. All health and welfare requirements are met and staff are fastidious in securing children's safety. Relationships with families are excellent and really help children to settle and learn. The key worker system and excellent communication with home, ensure everyone works together to optimise children's learning and welfare. Very strong systems are in place to identify and track children's learning on a day by day basis so that small steps are celebrated.

Planning is effective and ensures that experiences are very well suited to children's needs, although sometimes there could be more opportunities for children to move freely between outside and indoor learning environments. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader is highly effective and, with a very strong team, ensures that all children, whatever their needs, have the same excellent opportunities to learn and that their achievements are recognised, celebrated and built on.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## Views of parents and carers

Parents overwhelmingly support and praise the work of the school and its leadership. No negative comments were received. Parents know their children are safe and that they enjoy school. In their comments they praise, in particular, the school's leaders, the enthusiasm and commitment of staff, saying also that their children's achievement for example has 'exceeded even the highest expectations'. Inspectors agree with parents that this is an outstanding school which is extremely well run by a committed staff.

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Pupils are safe and happy and achieve very well indeed.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Longwill A Primary School for Deaf Children to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspector received 22 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 49 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	86	3	14	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	77	5	23	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	64	8	36	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	55	8	36	1	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	73	6	27	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	64	7	32	1	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	12	55	10	45	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	13	59	7	32	1	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	73	6	27	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	64	8	36	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	68	7	32	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	14	64	8	36	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	68	7	32	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



23 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Longwill A Primary School for Deaf Children, Birmingham, B31 1LD

Thank you so much for welcoming me into your school and particularly to those of you who talked to me about your school. You told me how much you liked the school and how it was helping you to learn. I was so pleased to hear how safe you felt and how much you knew about keeping healthy. It was really good to see how well you are learning in your classrooms and that you really get on with each other. Your behaviour is excellent and I think the way that the school helps you and your family to learn together is excellent. You told me that you think your school is brilliant, because the teachers are so kind and really help you to think and learn. I agree that you have an excellent school and that the Mrs Day and all of the teachers work very hard to make your lessons interesting, fun and just right for you.

I also liked the ways in which they help you to think about other people and their needs such as when you think about the school for the deaf in Gambia or when you raise money for other things.

I have asked Mrs Day and the governors to think about one thing that would help you achieve even more:

- that teachers remind you more often of what your targets are in lessons, so you remember them more easily and can judge yourself a bit more easily how you are doing.

You can help to by continuing to try your best and making sure that you come to school every day.

Yours sincerely

Susan Lewis

Lead inspector

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