

Long Field School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120308
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	358739
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Rashida Sharif HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	824
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Dehnel
Headteacher	Robert Garrett (Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	26 June 2007
School address	Ambleside Way Melton Mowbray LE13 0BN
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Most of the time was spent looking at learning, including observations of 48 lessons taught by 44 teachers. A number of joint observations were undertaken with members of the senior leadership team. Meetings were held with a range of staff, groups of students and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school documentation including information about students' progress, improvement plans, school policies, teaching records, health and safety information and an analysis of 100 parental questionnaires, together with 117 questionnaires from students in Years 8 and 11 and 52 from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- How effectively staff responded to the change in the age range of students in the school.
- How effectively teaching and learning ensure all groups of students make good progress in lessons and across time in the context of the changing profile of the school.
- How effectively leaders at all levels monitor and evaluate the school's performance to sustain and bring about continuous improvements.

Information about the school

Long Field School is smaller than an average-sized secondary school. It changed from an 11-14 into an 11-19 school in September 2009, although there are currently no sixth form students, the oldest year group being Year 11. Student numbers have increased significantly in the last year and the school is currently oversubscribed. Over 30 new staff, including six newly-qualified teachers, joined in September 2009. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements, bringing the percentage in line with the national average. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, as is the proportion of students for whom English is an additional language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentages of students from minority ethnic backgrounds have increased but, overall, remain well below average.

The school became a specialist sports college in September 2010. The school holds a Healthy Schools award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Long Field School is a good school. The good care, guidance and support it provides for its students, together with a curriculum tailored to their needs, effective tracking of their progress and well-targeted interventions, ensure that students make good progress in their learning and achieve well. Students' performance in English is better than it is in mathematics and science. This is matched by the teaching in these subjects. Students are proud of their school, attend regularly and make good progress as a result of mostly good teaching and good monitoring by the senior leadership team. However, the growing numbers of those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language only make satisfactory progress. This is because their needs are not always identified accurately and some teachers lack knowledge, skills and understanding in how best to respond to their specific learning needs. The staff recognise this changing profile of the school and are wholly committed to becoming a truly inclusive school through, for example, working more closely with parents and carers. Leaders are aware that they need to develop strategies to engage parents and carers more effectively in the work and ambition of the school and in their children's learning.

The good behaviour of students in and around the school and their willingness to support each other demonstrate a growing maturity, with many students taking wider responsibility. They make a good contribution to the school through being members of the school council, acting as mentors for younger students and by raising money for numerous local and national charities.

Leadership and management are good. The school is emerging well from a period of great turbulence. The staffing is now stable, and specialist teachers are leading each of the subjects and aspects. The principal's energy and vision are apparent. He is ably supported by an equally energetic vice principal who shares his vision. The drive for improvement is gaining momentum with the middle leadership team. However, there is too much variation in the leadership and performance of different subjects, particularly in the quality of teaching and learning, and of setting appropriately challenging and realistic targets for improvement.

Some staff have found the transition from teaching in a middle school to a secondary school difficult to adjust to. The principal has worked tirelessly to guide the school through the recent local reorganisation. Staff and staffing structures have been reviewed to build a strong senior leadership team and to ensure that every opportunity is given to make this school a better place for all the students. This has sometimes meant making decisions that have not always been popular with some staff and parents. The school's self-evaluation is accurate. The effectiveness of planning and professional development has improved students' rates of progress, the quality of teaching and other aspects of provision,

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particularly the curriculum. Consequently, this improving picture indicates the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve overall achievement, particularly in mathematics and science, by:
 - raising the percentage of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A* to C including mathematics and English to 70% by 2012
 - increasing the proportion of good and better teaching by eradicating any satisfactory or inadequate teaching
 - improving the overall achievement and progress of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language by using assessment to inform planning
- Remove the variation in the quality of leadership of middle leaders by:
 - ensuring best practice is disseminated more widely
 - ensuring leaders review and evaluate the work of their departments rigorously, particularly with regard to the quality of teaching and learning
 - setting appropriately challenging and realistic targets for improvement.
- Develop strategies to engage parents and carers more effectively in the work and ambition of the school, so that they can support the school and their children's learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students join the school in Year 7 with attainment on entry that is close to average. By the end of Year 9, attainment is above average. They make good progress in their learning and, as a result, attainment is on course to be above average by the end of Year 11. The achievement and progress of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities have not improved in line with other students. They make satisfactory progress. The small, but increasing number of students for whom English is an additional language, also make satisfactory progress.

There are some strengths in students' personal and social development. Students say they feel safe and that the rare cases of bullying or racist incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively by the school. The vast majority are respectful towards staff and cooperate with adults well. Students' behaviour is good around the school and in most lessons. Occasionally, it falls below this standard when the teacher does not use consistent strategies to manage it. Students understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle, including issues relating to diet, fitness, mental health and the use of drugs. Some students admit to not always eating healthily. They feel safe and well cared for, and express confidence that there is always a member of staff to talk to should the need arise. Many students pursue active lifestyles through participation in a wide range of activities encouraged through the recently acquired sports specialist status. Students have good awareness of the value of diverse cultures and demonstrate a good understanding of moral and social issues through their involvement in the school and wider community. Students who spoke with inspectors told them of the help, support and guidance they

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receive from staff to help them with their aspirations for the future, whether for further education, employment or training. Students are beginning to reflect on their experiences, develop positive self-esteem and celebrate a wide range of different cultural and faith events. The school recognises they need to do more work in developing their own and students' understanding of spiritual development.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning have improved steadily since the last inspection. The quality is good and, in some instances, outstanding. Over three quarters of the lessons seen by inspectors were judged to be good or better, and there were examples of outstanding practice. All teachers are specialists in their subjects and have access to a wide range of information about their students which they use carefully when planning their lessons. However, the specific learning needs of some of the vulnerable groups, for example those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language, are not fully met. Consequently, they make satisfactory progress. This is because teachers are not always confident in using teaching strategies that best support these students. Students enjoy their learning and are eager to do well in lessons, especially when they are actively involved and teachers' skilful questioning draws them into discussions and debate. They respond particularly well to more practical subjects. As one student put it, 'I enjoy lessons where I can do things, like science for example. I enjoy doing experiments.'

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Where teaching is less successful teachers do not fully build on students' responses to develop key teaching points or to engage students in discussion. Some teachers dominate the lessons with over-lengthy, unnecessary explanations. The use of assessment to support learning is inconsistent. Although work in books is marked regularly, teachers do not always explain clearly enough what students need to do to further improve, nor do they follow up whether students have responded to comments in their books and log books.

The coherent and relevant curriculum is regularly reviewed to meet the needs of students. Partnerships established through the vocational courses benefit all curriculum areas. The curriculum promotes students' social, moral and cultural development well through well-planned 'reflective time'. However, not all students, and particularly those in Year 11, are convinced about this provision, where they spend part of a lesson every day setting and reviewing their goals. The range of extra-curricular activities, particularly those linked with physical education, further enhance and broaden students' personal and academic experiences.

The effectiveness of care, guidance and support is good, as are transition arrangements for students joining the school. All aspects of students' development and progress are carefully monitored to ensure that interventions are swift. The school makes good use of other agencies when required. However, the school acknowledges that some of this practice falls short in meeting the range of needs of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the small number of those with English as an additional need. Some of the gifted and talented students are supported well through a growing range of opportunities to enable them to 'fast track' qualifications and increase the number of GCSE and other qualifications they take.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The strength of the leadership provided by the principal, supported by the governors through major changes, is a key element in the school's ongoing improvement and its many good features. The principal provides strong leadership which has improved the school since its last inspection and during a period of many challenges. He has a clear vision for the school with a passionate belief in improving the life chances of all its students. The senior team is providing the capacity to focus more effectively on improving teaching and learning, especially in the weaker subjects, such as mathematics and science. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for further improvement. Strategies to eradicate any weaknesses in teaching are becoming effective

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through regular support and mentoring. The quality of middle leadership is variable. Where it is good it has driven forward good improvements for example in English. However, many of the subject self-evaluations are lengthy and do not always sharply focus on what students need to do to improve or why they have attributed the grades they have. Their monitoring of teaching is variable, focusing more on teaching than what the students have learned. The good practice that exists is not always shared or built upon consistently by all staff.

The school's promotion of equality opportunities is satisfactory. The school is making every effort to close the gap in achievement between different groups of students.

Governance is good. The governors have and continue to play an active role in supporting the school in its transition. They have good knowledge and understanding of what needs to improve and what role they can play in facilitating these improvements. They are supportive and challenge the school and its staff appropriately to ensure that all the statutory requirements are fully met. They continue to manage the school's finances well despite some recent challenges. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. Although the school plays an active role in its local community it does not always evaluate the impact of this work. The school's international links with, for example India, extend students' global awareness.

There are clear safeguarding policies and procedures in place and they meet government requirements. Staff work closely with a range of agencies to ensure the safety of their students, including when they are working offsite. The school deploys its resources well and provides good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

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Views of parents and carers

The school was disappointed with the level of response from parents and carers. This response did not reflect their own recent survey when a larger percentage of parents responded positively. The large majority of those who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire are happy with their children's experiences of the school, many praised specific aspects of the school's work, including the care and support offered to them and their children. Many commented on the recent reorganisation of the local schools. A significant minority of parents raised issues about behaviour in class and the school's ability to fully meet the needs of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These and some other issues were linked with the school not being large enough to accommodate the larger numbers of students now attending the school, large class sizes and narrow corridors. A small minority of parents and carers raised issues about a low level of bullying but acknowledge that this is dealt with swiftly. Her Majesty's Inspector discussed some of these concerns raised by parents and carers which related to individual matters rather than whole-school issues with the senior leadership team and governors.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Long Field School 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 inspection team received 100 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 824 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	45	52	42	8	7	4	3
The school keeps my child safe	49	40	68	55	2	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	43	35	66	54	13	11	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	27	68	55	16	13	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	28	23	72	59	14	11	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	20	64	52	23	19	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	16	83	67	11	9	1	1
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)	26	21	67	54	6	5	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	25	70	57	17	14	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	20	58	47	16	13	10	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	18	72	59	11	9	7	6
The school is led and managed effectively	37	30	59	48	16	13	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	37	57	46	14	11	3	2

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 all 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



10 December 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Long Field School, Melton Mowbray, LE13 0BN

I would like to thank you all for your help during the inspection of your school. We found what you had to say very helpful in making our judgment about your school. I would particularly like to thank those of you in Years 8 and 11 who gave up your time to discuss with me some of the concerns you had raised in the student questionnaire. I have raised some of your concerns with the senior leadership team who will be meeting with you in the near future to make sure that your concerns are heard and acted upon. We were pleased to hear that so many of you enjoy attending school and that you feel safe. We agree with you and your parents that the care, guidance and support you receive are good. You told us that you are well prepared for the future whether it is work or further learning.

The inspectors found that you and your teachers have continued to work very hard despite some of the recent challenges you have had to face. Your school is now double the size it was when it was last inspected, with students now ranging from 11 to 16. We found your school to be a good school. The curriculum is varied, allowing some of you to take your GCSEs early and helping you to develop well as young people. We were pleased to see so many of you willingly take part in the good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly those that help you to improve your work even more. We were impressed that so many of you want to help the school to become an even better place through your work, for example, in the local community and as mentors. You appear to have good knowledge and understanding about adopting healthy lifestyles, although some of you do not always put this into practice.

We worked very closely with your principal and agreed on what the school should do to make it even better. We have asked the school to:

- improve your overall achievement, particularly in mathematics and science, by raising the percentage of you gaining five or more GCSE grades A* to C to 70% by 2012
- increase the proportion of good and better teaching by eradicating any inadequate teaching
- improve the overall achievement of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language
- make sure that heads of departments work together to share good practice so that all of you do equally well in all the subjects
- work more closely with your parents and carers so that they can support the school and you in your learning.

You can help by continuing to attend regularly and working hard.

Yours sincerely

Rashida Sharif

Her Majesty's Inspector

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