

Longley School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107797
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	377649
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Alastair Younger

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	124
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hilary Pollard
Headteacher	Philip Gibbins
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Ten lessons were observed, each taught by a different teacher. Meetings were held with senior staff, a representative of the governing body and representatives of the local authority. Informal discussions were held with several pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation relating to pupils' progress, school improvement planning and safeguarding. The 35 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The extent to which pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour and learning.
- Teachers' use of assessment information to promote pupils' learning and progress.
- The impact of staffing changes on school improvement.

Information about the school

All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The main provision is for pupils with complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities usually relating to communication and behaviour. A growing number of pupils are educated in the school's specialist provision for children on the autistic spectrum. About a half of all pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Boys outnumber girls by about five-to-one. About a fifth of pupils is from minority-ethnic backgrounds and speaks English as an additional language.

The school is part of the local authority's plan to reorganise provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Statutory consultation is underway with a view to the school becoming the local authority's specialist provision for children with the most severe and complex autistic spectrum and communication disorders. This would involve a reduction in the number of pupils but a broadening of the age range, from five to 16 to two to 19.

Almost a quarter of the teachers have been on the staff for less than a year. The deputy headteacher has been absent for the past year. In that time his duties have been covered by the assistant headteacher and members of the management team. The past year has been disrupted by substantial renovation and refurbishment of the premises.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. Improvement since the last inspection has been hampered by staff changes, the absence of key staff and building work. Current leaders and managers demonstrate a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, gained from accurate self-evaluation and accurate assessment of pupils' progress. They have successfully tackled most of the weaknesses identified by the previous inspection. As such, the school has a satisfactory capacity for improvement.

Teaching is satisfactory. Relationships between adults and pupils are a strength and planning shows many signs of improvement. Nevertheless, too many lessons are over-directed by adults, which reduces opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills. There are too many occasions when teachers focus over-much on what they are teaching and not enough on what pupils are learning. In a few lessons, not enough is expected of pupils. Most pupils make the progress expected of them. When progress slows, a suitable range of interventions to support individuals are available and are usually effective in helping them get back on track.

Pupils enjoy school and feel safe. This is because they are well cared for, guided and supported. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good as is the extent to which they adopt healthy lifestyles. The school engages well with parents and carers, who appreciate what is being done to help their children. The school also works well with a wide range of support agencies and professionals.

The headteacher and acting deputy headteacher provide satisfactory leadership and management. Governance is also satisfactory but the governing body is not adding sufficient scrutiny and challenge to its existing support. Members of the senior management team fulfil their roles adequately but subject leadership is not sufficiently embedded.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and hence pupils' progress by:
 - establishing a better balance between adult-led activities and independent work
 - ensuring that when teachers evaluate lessons they focus upon what pupils have learned rather than what they have done
 - ensuring that time allocated to lessons is always productively used
 - raising expectations.
- Improve leadership, management and governance by:
 - strengthening the role of subject managers by making the senior management team's expectations of their role clear
 - ensuring that the governing body plays a more proactive role in school improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

In lessons, pupils usually concentrate well and try hard. They show interest in what they are learning and take pride in their work. They are keen to respond to teachers' questions and when possible join in with conversations. When doing practical work, such as simple chromatography, they listen well to instructions and handle equipment carefully.

Nearly all pupils join the school with low levels of attainment. Their achievement was determined by learning and progress alone because the nature of pupils' special educational needs means that their attainment is unlikely to rise above low. Achievement is satisfactory. There are no major differences in the progress pupils make in different subjects nor in the results for different groups of pupils including those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those from minority-ethnic backgrounds who speak English as an additional language. Progress is also broadly similar across all age groups.

Pupils feel safe because they are well looked after. Older pupils are considerate and kind to younger ones. Pupils are confident that when they have a problem it will be dealt with promptly. There is a good sense of community amongst pupils and they are proud of their school. They enjoy participating in communal activities such as 'the big sing' or when visiting musicians perform for them. Their contribution to the broader community is more limited. Attendance is broadly average. Misbehaviour by individuals rarely disrupts the learning of others because when incidents occur these pupils are quickly removed from class to receive the support they need. Occasionally, this action is somewhat premature, reducing opportunities for pupils to demonstrate more independence in managing their own behaviour. Serious misbehaviour is rare but exclusions rose last term. Pupil's spiritual, moral and social development is stronger than their awareness of cultural diversity. Pupils show a good awareness of how to live healthily. They eat sensibly and most enjoy exercise, including bracing country walks and adventure activities on residential trips.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
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	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory. About a half of teaching is good and there is little that is inadequate. A small amount is outstanding. Adults and pupils relate well to one another. This helps to maintain an atmosphere in class that is conducive to learning. Too often, lessons do not fully involve pupils as learning partners, with adults tending to take an overly dominant role. A concerted drive to improve lesson planning has resulted in improvements, with teachers identifying what they want pupils to learn in each lesson. Not all do so with similar skill, however, and there are still too many instances where learning objectives are too vague; the request to 'work safely' for instance is a directive, not a learning objective. This vagueness makes it harder for teachers to evaluate the learning that goes on in lessons. Teachers are increasingly taking into account results of pupils' assessments to help them to vary tasks for pupils of differing ability but they are not sufficiently using their own ongoing observations to adjust the content of lessons immediately they realise a pupil has mastered what has been taught. Time is usually used well but there are still instances where lessons end early or when time is wasted through lack of preparation, for instance, when materials are not ready at hand for practical activities.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It suitably meets individuals' needs and is well enriched with a good range of visits and an extensive range of visitors. Much of the enrichment promotes pupils' personal development successfully. There is an increasing focus on providing more vocational opportunities for older pupils in order to prepare them better for life after school. Cross-curricular provision is satisfactory but is stronger in literacy than numeracy. There is a good programme of personal, social and health education and this is reflected in outcomes for these areas.

¹The 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.

There are good arrangements for ensuring pupils receive the care, guidance and support they need. Parents and carers justifiably express great confidence in this aspect of the school's work. Staff share a good awareness of individual's needs and the support they need. There are striking examples of how initiatives to improve attendance have made inroads into reducing persistent absence, with the result that attendance is rapidly improving. The school works closely with many other agencies and professionals to coordinate support for pupils and, as several parents and carers testify, their families.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Many unavoidable factors have come together over the past year to create difficulties for leaders, managers and the governing body. All parties, however, have worked collectively and successfully to prevent these factors impacting on achievement. Although the leadership and management of teaching and learning is satisfactory and is leading to some improvements, the involvement of subject leaders in monitoring the performance of the school is not fully effective because expectations of their role in driving improvement are insufficiently clear. The governing body is supportive but not sufficiently involved in driving improvement. Statutory duties are adequately discharged and care is taken to ensure that the school is a safe place for staff and pupils.

Pupils satisfactorily share equal opportunities. The school now has an accurate set of assessment data against which individual and group progress can be measured and differences ironed out. There are no signs of discrimination or harassment. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory. All regulations are followed and duties are met in line with government requirements. A few minor points for improvement were shared between inspectors and senior managers.

The school itself operates as a cohesive community, especially the pupils. Pupils from different religious and ethnic backgrounds get on very well with one another. Pupils of different ages and gender mix freely and harmoniously. Senior leaders and managers have identified the difficulties caused by the very wide catchment area and the fact that all pupils are transported to school, thus complicating the development of a communal parent support group. It has suitable plans to address this.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are very supportive. The aspect of the school's work that attracted most criticism was the extent to which it promoted healthy lifestyles. No parents or carers explained their reasoning for this view and inspectors would like to reassure them that the promotion of healthy lifestyles is good. Generally speaking, the views of parents and carers are that the school's work satisfies them. This is also the view of inspectors.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Longley 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 35 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 118 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	54	12	34	2	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	51	13	37	1	3	2	6
The school informs me about my child's progress	20	57	14	40	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	34	19	54	2	6	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	19	54	15	43	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	37	19	54	2	6	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	43	14	40	5	14	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	37	20	57	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	57	13	37	2	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	43	16	46	1	3	2	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	40	18	51	3	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	46	17	49	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	49	16	46	1	3	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 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



26 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Longley School, Huddersfield, HD5 8JE

Longley is a satisfactory school. You told us you enjoy attending and feel happy and safe. Your parents and carers agree.

You make satisfactory progress but we would like this to be better so we have asked teachers to be more aware of what you are learning in class, to make better use of time and to allow you to take more initiative.

Your timetable gives you a satisfactory range of learning opportunities and adds to this with a good range of visits and visitors. You are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles and your spiritual, moral, social and, to a lesser extent, your cultural development is good. Your behaviour is satisfactory; so is your attendance.

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and being so helpful and polite.

Yours sincerely

Alastair Younger
Lead inspector

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