

Longridge High School A Maths and Computing College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119749
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379883
Inspection dates	2–3 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Sally Kenyon HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	723
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr J K Ackers
Headteacher	Jane Green
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 29 teachers in 29 lessons through formal lesson observations and a further 13 teachers in 13 lessons through learning walks. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at a variety of students' work from across the school. The team considered responses from 340 parental questionnaires.

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

- The achievement, behaviour and attendance of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics and English.
- The effectiveness of the curriculum in meeting the needs of boys at all ability levels.
- The consistency and rigour of behaviour management strategies and their impact on outcomes.
- The impact of school self-evaluation on driving improvement.

Information about the school

Longridge High School is a smaller-than-average secondary school. It is a specialist mathematics and computing college and also has a second specialism of Rural Dimension. The number of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average, as is the percentage of students from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school has Healthy School status, is a Football Association Charter Standard School and is Preston's nomination for Lancashire Sports School of the Year.

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

Longridge High School is a good and improving school. This is summed up by one parent who states their only concern is, 'that there isn't a sixth form'.

The school, which is very much a part of the local community, has immense pride in its work especially since they achieved their best results ever in 2011. This is undoubtedly as a result of consistently high quality teaching and rigorous tracking of students' progress. However, there is a small group of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities who, while their achievement is satisfactory, do not make the same good progress as their peers due to opportunities missed to thoroughly review their progress in order to effectively raise their achievement.

Students enter the school with broadly average levels of attainment. Achievement overall has been uneven since the last inspection but has culminated in a sharp rise in achievement for 2011 which is on track to be further improved in 2012. These improvements have taken time to emerge as the school has worked upon improving the quality of teaching in addition to employing some sharply focused interventions in Key Stage 4. Although there is good support for students throughout the school, this takes on a more strategic nature at Key Stage 4 where a range of mentoring, refined progress grades and close monitoring of targeted groups allows the school to work effectively with individuals.

Teaching is good with some outstanding practice. Students were highly motivated when allowed to work independently, thought critically about their own and others' work and used their creative talents. For example, in a Year 9 textiles lesson students drew freehand using a range of stimuli to create highly intricate artwork which they were able to explain and critically evaluate.

There is overwhelming support for the headteacher from the staff and parents and carers who responded to the survey. One parent commented: 'Mrs Green is an inspirational headteacher and addresses any concerns; she always makes time to talk and I feel confident that any issues raised will be addressed.' However, the headteacher rightly directly attributes the school's improvement to the strength of all of her staff, as well as the leadership team. She has strengthened leadership since the last inspection by increasing the autonomy and accountability of middle leaders and co-opted three of them onto the senior leadership team to undertake specific school improvement projects. Alongside the improvements in achievement,

attendance and teaching, this demonstrates good capacity. Leaders at all levels have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses through a vast range of data collection and analysis, but this information is not as streamlined as it might be.

The governing body has been pivotal in holding the school to account in being both a critical friend and helping it to move on. There is a great skill set, determination and commitment among the governing body indicated not least by the two-year campaign by it to have a crossing installed on the busy road outside the school to help improve the safety of youngsters on their way home. However, opportunities are missed to employ its expertise in whole-school self-evaluation.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the achievement of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities to that of the rest by:
 - enhancing processes for reviewing the progress of this group.
- Refine systems for whole-school self-evaluation by:
 - increasing the participation of the governing body
 - streamlining systems for monitoring at senior leader level.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students make good progress from their starting points leaving with above average attainment. In 2011, the proportion of students making the expected progress in English and mathematics significantly improved as did the proportion of students gaining A* to A grades in GCSE. Challenging targets are set and swift action taken if students' progress falls below that expected, for example with resit classes taken after school in English and mathematics for those whose results were lower than expected in modular tests. The dip in results in 2010 was due to a small number of highly challenging students who had joined the school in Key Stage 4. These results prompted a whole-school review of tracking, monitoring and target-setting and have resulted in robust systems and a tightly focused raising attainment plan. The large majority of subjects improved the number of A* to C grades in GCSE in 2011 with the majority achieving a better performance for the more able at grades A* and A.

Students were seen making outstanding progress in a Year 10 physical education lesson. Students worked relentlessly through a series of circuit training activities which the teachers had modelled for them. The fast pace and unswerving focus on assessment criteria allowed students to speak confidently and articulately about their learning, stating which muscles they were using, how to do the exercise properly and the overall benefit to their learning and health.

All the students who responded to the survey say that they feel safe in school and other students reported that they would have a number of adults to turn to if they were in difficulty. The very large majority of behaviour seen in lessons is good as is

behaviour around the school. Arrangements for internal exclusions in the 'seclusion' room have been reorganised and the number of referrals decreased significantly from 2010. A clear and effective policy of 'consequences' is in place should any behavioural issues occur and students report that these are rare.

Above-average attendance has been achieved through the carefully planned actions of the attendance team, punctuality is good and persistent absence is below the national average. All students who leave the school continue into education, employment or training. Students adopt healthy lifestyles well and are particularly keen to discuss their sporting achievements.

Social, moral, spiritual and cultural education is good. Many lessons encompass thought-provoking discussions including a history lesson about bravery and valour. A well-attended craft club takes place after school where students can explore their creative talents resulting in, among other things, some beautifully expressive masks. The school has really embraced active citizenship and has a global citizenship group along with a school council. Two students are travelling to Malawi to research what life is like in a village where there is no school and see how they can be of help.

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	1
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	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good with some outstanding examples seen. The best teaching is characterised by a prompt and purposeful start to lessons and clear sharing of objectives, levels and grades and the effective use of assessment information to ensure work is well matched to students' different needs. This was evident in an outstanding English lesson where Year 10 students studied war poetry to identify different types of conflict. The room was a hive of activity as students worked in highly effective groups to tightly focused assessment criteria.

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

Where teaching is weaker, assessment features less prominently, the pace slows and students spend too much time listening to the teacher rather than being able to work independently and explore ideas for themselves. However, these weaker features are evident in only a small minority of lessons. Lots of good examples of marking were seen which gave the students’ next steps in their learning. Students report that these really help them progress and appreciate the opportunities to comment on them or write their own.

The curriculum is good with a variety of subjects and pathways offered at Key Stage 4. The historically low levels of entry for subjects such as modern foreign languages are improving as the school responds to new and emerging national benchmarks. The school has clearly invested much time in developing cross-curricular information and communication technology (ICT), as part of the specialism and it is used effectively to enhance learning by teachers and students alike. The mathematics specialism has been used to improve achievement both within the department and elsewhere and has recently launched a whole-school numeracy initiative. There are several compelling examples of how the Rural Dimension aspect of the school’s specialism has ensured that some students, whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, have kept engaged in their learning, maintained good attendance and gone on to further training or employment.

Almost all students who responded to the survey said that adults cared about them and when asked what the best thing about the school was, one student replied, ‘The teachers because they support us’. Prefects are fiercely proud of their position in school and take their responsibilities seriously; this is evident during lunchtimes when they are on duty in the school restaurant. Planners are used effectively to communicate between home and school and an effective reward system is in place. Good examples of support from teaching assistants were seen in classrooms.

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 headteacher has been instrumental in raising aspirations and expectations. This, combined with a highly committed staff, has secured and built upon previous success. Staff speak highly of the refreshed programme for continual professional development which allows all staff to share good practice and has highlighted the breadth of knowledge, skills and abilities among them. Three middle leaders have also benefited from the opportunity to take on a higher-profile leadership role by becoming associate members of the senior leadership team. Almost all staff who responded to the survey agreed that they know what the school is trying to achieve, feel involved in achieving it and feel that the governing body does an effective job.

The governing body works closely with leaders at all levels and meets with students on issues such as behaviour and attendance. It observes the quality of teaching, seeks the views of students and parents and carers and acts upon them. For example, a student survey showed that Year 7 students did not feel happy using the same toilets as the older students so the governing body worked with the school to create a dedicated Year 7 washroom facility.

The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality and tackles discrimination is satisfactory rather than good due to the lower achievement of some students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, the school has already taken some action in this area which has resulted in improved achievement. Safeguarding is good and the school provides good value for money.

The school engages well with parents and carers through a variety of planned meetings and a regular reporting system. Some parents and carers were particularly impressed by the helpfulness of staff in the school office. Partnerships are used well to promote learning and well-being, for example, one middle leader visited other schools to look at good practice which then had a positive impact on raising achievement when findings were disseminated.

The school is a very cohesive community. Through strategic planning, students work well together and are keen to help others, for example by inviting more senior members of the local community in for a Christmas party. Members of the local community use the school’s sports hall outside of school hours to take part in a vast array of activities from drama to taekwondo.

These are the grades for the 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	2
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	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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Almost all of the parents and carers who responded to the survey feel that their children enjoy school, are kept safe and are making enough progress. The overwhelming majority feel that the school is led and managed effectively and that teaching is good. A few comments were received about the support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, homework, bullying and behaviour. All of these concerns were followed up with the school. The inspection team found

behaviour to be good and arrangements for homework and anti-bullying to be in place. The progress of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities was found to be satisfactory and forms one of the areas identified for improvement.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Longridge High School A Maths and Computing College 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 340 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 723 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	120	35	199	58	15	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	135	40	196	57	8	2	1	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	112	33	204	60	16	5	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	95	28	219	64	13	4	3	1
The teaching is good at this school	95	28	225	66	9	3	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	73	21	217	64	38	11	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	60	18	238	70	30	9	3	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)	109	32	195	57	12	4	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	95	28	218	64	16	5	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	109	32	173	51	35	10	6	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	73	21	213	62	25	7	5	1
The school is led and managed effectively	126	37	195	57	9	3	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	118	35	205	60	12	4	1	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 are 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.



4 November 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Longridge High School A Maths and Computing College,
Preston, PR3 3AR**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school earlier this month. Thank you also for the time you spent telling us about your school and explaining why you are so proud of it. Thank you for completing the questionnaires. We listened carefully to what you said and your contribution helped us reach our judgements.

We feel that your school is a good school and you achieve well. Those of you who responded to our survey said that you feel safe in school and all of you that we spoke to around the school agreed. We also found:

- teaching and assessment are good
- you are very caring, like to take on responsibility and help others
- your behaviour is good and you are proud of your school.

We have asked your school to raise the achievement of some students who need specific support for learning so they make the same good progress as everyone else. We have also asked the senior leaders to streamline the way they look at information about you so they can improve your progress even further.

Yours sincerely

Sally Kenyon
Her Majesty's Inspector

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