

Longley School

Dog Kennel Bank, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, HD5 8JE

Inspection dates 12–13 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Over the last two years, the progress made by pupils from their individual starting points, overall, has not been swift enough.
- Until recently, too much teaching has required improvement; as such, it has not been good enough to accelerate pupils' progress and raise achievement.
- Pupils' behaviour is still sometimes inconsistent and in some lessons, behaviour does not contribute to successful learning.
- The temporary nature of some of the senior leadership positions has meant that there has been a reduced capacity of leaders' impact on improving teaching and achievement.
- Until the recent past, governors have not held the school to account for the pupils' achievement.
- The work of the key stage leaders has yet to have a successful effect on improving key aspects of the school's work.

The school has the following strengths

- Achievement has accelerated recently, particularly in writing, for boys and for those eligible for extra funding (pupil premium).
- Teaching is improving rapidly.
- A few pupils make some remarkable achievements.
- Pupils are proud of the school and say they feel safe while they are there.
- Plans made for each individual pupil's personal development result in the vast majority of pupils moving on to further education or training.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 11 lessons, including one lesson that took place in the off-site provision. All lessons were observed jointly either with the acting headteacher or an assistant headteacher.
- Inspectors considered the school's written view of its own performance; they held discussions with school staff and two headteachers from the neighbouring schools identified by the local authority to provide support. They also spoke with the Chair of the Governing Body and five other governors, as well as two representatives from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the school's procedures for safeguarding. They looked at the school development plan, records of lesson observations, targets set for teachers, and documents that track pupils' progress.
- The inspectors held two separate discussions, one with Key Stage 2 pupils and the other with pupils from Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.
- Inspectors took account of 17 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), as well as 28 staff questionnaires. They also spoke with a parent on the telephone.

Inspection team

Pauline Hilling-Smith, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Doreen Davenport

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Longley School is a special school for pupils within the autistic spectrum, with moderate or severe learning difficulties, and behaviour, emotional and social difficulties.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. There are twice as many pupils as the national average from minority ethnic groups and whose first language is not English.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and children that are looked after by the local authority) is more than twice the national average. There are four times as many boys in the school as girls.
- Pupils are able to take part in work-based courses off-site, at the Chestnut Centre.
- The deputy headteacher took over as acting headteacher in February 2013 and continued to work alongside two local leaders in education, who are headteachers; this was arranged previously by the local authority to support the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good and more is outstanding in order to accelerate progress and raise pupils' achievement, particularly in literacy and in Key Stage 3, by making sure that:
 - work given to pupils matches their needs and abilities so that all groups of pupils are effectively challenged throughout the lesson, particularly in literacy
 - all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve so that pupils reach their full potential
 - teachers provide more time in lessons for pupils to work on tasks at just the right level of difficulty for them
 - teachers develop their subject knowledge further in phonics (the sounds that letters make) and in specific subjects
 - outstanding practice in teaching is shared more widely in the school.
- In relation to pupils' behaviour and safety:
 - ensure that pupils' behaviour continues to be good at all times
 - make sure all staff consistently apply school policies and procedures to manage pupils' behaviour
 - give pupils work that always meets their individual special needs more closely and captures their interest so they remain focused on their learning and develop the ability to concentrate well
 - routinely analyse data gathered about the behaviour of pupils and use the information collected to sustain improvement.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - further developing the role of the key stage leaders so that they provide more effective support in driving improvement forward
 - strengthening governance so that the school is held to account for its performance
 - swiftly appointing a permanent headteacher.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- As a result of their special educational needs and disabilities, the starting points of pupils who enter the school are, in the main, below those that are typical for their age. However, overall, data show that pupils have made insufficient progress from their starting points.
- Data for the end of each key stage over the last two years show progress has been inconsistent. It has not been good enough, notably in writing and particularly for boys, in 2011. In 2012, progress in literacy by the end of Key Stage 3 was too slow.
- The gap in progress between boys and girls has been too wide. School data for 2012 show that few boys made progress in English, and no pupils with speech and language or sensory difficulties made progress in English or mathematics at the nationally benchmarked fastest pace. Data for the current year show that this gap is now closing, though it is still inconsistent.
- The gap in the speed of progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding and their peers has varied widely since the last inspection. In 2012, the data showed half as many eligible pupils reached the higher level in writing compared to non-eligible pupils. This gap is closing as a result of intervention to improve writing.
- The teaching of reading is given priority, especially in older age groups. It is particularly effective for more-able pupils because it is taught systematically. However, further training in teaching pupils phonics (the sounds that letters make) is planned to enable less-able pupils to make the same rate of progress. Older pupils say they enjoy reading.
- Progress in communication is good because teachers and support assistants are skilled in sign language, making gestures and using facial expressions. This means that less-able pupils make good progress in their learning.
- The work of teaching assistants with individual pupils and small groups is making a significant contribution in ensuring that pupils are given good support. This is having a good effect on progress, especially in pupils' personal development.
- Over the last year, all groups of pupils, including boys and those pupils eligible for the pupil premium, have made accelerated progress, especially in writing.
- Pupils within the autistic spectrum settle quickly when they start at the school and begin to make faster progress. This is because their needs are well understood and planned for, guided by expert knowledge.
- Some pupils with challenging behaviour in Key Stage 4 quicken their progress. This is because they are motivated by the vocational courses, designed for each individual, which enable them to fulfil their ambitions.
- A minority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) said that they disagreed with the statement that the pupils made good progress. Inspectors agree that some pupils should be making more progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Until recently, too much teaching has required improvement, and some has been inadequate. As such, it has not been good enough to bring about rapid progress and raise pupils' achievement. No inadequate teaching was observed during the inspection.
- In less effective lessons, pupils can spend too long waiting for their peers to respond to questions, which means that some are not challenged throughout and they lose interest.
- Sometimes pupils spend too much time completing work sheets which do not progress their learning. When this happens, the pace of learning is too slow.
- Teaching has improved rapidly over the last year. The majority of teaching observed during the inspection was good and a little is now outstanding. This is because leaders have focused well on improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement. Effective training for all

staff has been provided, which has improved their teaching skills.

- Where teaching is outstanding, teachers' expectations are very high, and pupils are fully engaged in their learning throughout the lesson. In these lessons, the pace of learning is brisk and pupils are challenged to reach higher levels. This is shown in pupils' art work, where there are examples of impressive pieces of work.
- Recent training in specifying the aims of the lessons at just the right level for each pupil has raised teachers' expectations. Teachers' subject knowledge is not as good as it should be in some subjects, such as geography at Key Stage 3 and in phonics across the school. However, a training session in phonics has been booked to overcome this.
- In the best lessons, teachers use questioning well, plan work expertly for individuals and for different groups, and are clear how adults are to be deployed. In a Year 10 mathematics lesson, groups of pupils greatly enjoyed playing mathematical games carefully designed to enable them to use and apply their skills at just the right level of difficulty. The teacher and support assistant expertly extended the pupils' thinking while the games were being played.
- A small minority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) did not agree that their children were well taught. Inspectors agree that over time, this has been the case.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- Nearly all pupils now behave well around the school. This is a significant change that has taken place over the last year. Prior to this, too many students were exhibiting challenging behaviour, which resulted in a high level of exclusions. A more consistent way of managing behaviour and a positive approach to tackling challenging conduct have reduced exclusions.
- In lessons, the standard of behaviour relates directly to the quality of teaching. Where teaching requires improvement, pupils are not calm or are passive. Conversely, in the better lessons, behaviour is good as pupils are motivated by what they are learning.
- Pupils feel safe in the school and are confident they have adults to talk with when needed. They say that the number of bullying incidents has fallen over the last year. Pupils are clear about the different forms of bullying and understand clearly what constitutes racist bullying.
- Some parents say that the school could have dealt better with bullying in the past. However, the majority now say that their child is happy and safe at the school.
- School leaders are setting new standards for being available and pupils are pleased that they can identify more staff on duty at break and lunchtimes for them to approach.
- Pupils help one another readily and are very supportive of the needs of others. For example, the more able either guide the less able students at lunchtime or help them to behave more appropriately. Pupils are now usually respectful and polite.
- In vocational education courses, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in the workshop, for example when they build bikes. All pupils are then able to take part in a Bikeability course, which contributes to their physical well-being.
- Attendance has improved rapidly, as a result of the work done by the school, and the attendance of many pupils is now good.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- The dedication of the acting headteacher has made a significant difference to the school over the last year. The provision of a clear vision, clear plans and precise actions to bring about improvement are now well understood by staff. However, leaders know that there is more to do to ensure that policies and procedures are always followed consistently by all staff, ambitious targets are set and good practice in teaching is consistently the norm.
- Already, improvement is evident in a number of areas; the progress of boys and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is accelerating because the quality of teaching is

improving. The number of incidents of poor behaviour has fallen.

- Although a permanent headteacher is yet to be appointed, the acting headteacher has provided stability in leadership with clear responsibilities. She is ably supported by senior leaders who are strongly leading school improvement and are now focusing on raising pupils' achievement. Although key stage leaders are beginning to help improve the quality of teaching, by checking learning and progress, this work has yet to have a full impact because it is not yet fully developed.
- Up until the recent past, teachers' pay was not linked well enough to the quality of their teaching and they were not held accountable for the progress of their pupils. However, procedures have been strengthened and are now having a positive impact on raising the quality of teaching.
- Pupils' previously slow progress and the wide gaps that have existed between the performances of groups of pupils mean that the promotion of equality of opportunity has been inadequate. However, leaders are now tracking the progress of groups of pupils more carefully and gaining a clearer picture of where improvement is needed most. Gaps are closing.
- Leaders are making improvements to the curriculum to ensure that the needs of the pupils are met. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is attended to in assemblies and in discussion with pupils.
- The local authority is providing long-term high-quality support. This has made a significant contribution to improving the leadership of the school and to school improvement overall.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Through the appointment of some new governors, the governing body is beginning to improve its effectiveness in holding the school to account. As a result, funding is now being used more effectively and standards are beginning to rise. Recent involvement by governors with greater individual expertise is giving the governing body an understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and of pupils' achievement. The governing body is just starting to support and challenge the school. Governors are beginning to have a clear picture of the quality of teaching; they understand how targets are set for teachers and how the school deals with any underperformance through performance management procedures.
 - Governors, from now, ensure that salary increases are linked to teaching quality, responsibilities held and pupils' performance. They have knowledge about decisions made about the spending of the pupil premium and the effect this is having on eligible pupils' progress. The governing body makes sure that all statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding, are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	107797
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	425704

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	140
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hilary Pollard
Headteacher (Acting)	Margaret Burton
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2011
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