

Long Field Academy

Ambleside Way, Melton Mowbray, LE13 0BN

Inspection dates 9–10 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- At the end of 2013, students in Year 11, including the disadvantaged and the most-able, did not achieve as well as they should, given their starting points on entry to the academy. Boys did less well than girls.
- Standards of attainment and rates of progress in English, mathematics and science fell in 2014. GCSE results were below average and too few students achieved the A* or A grades of which they are capable.
- Subject leaders were not sufficiently involved in raising achievement in the previous academic year. Some leaders were inaccurate in their assessments of student's progress.
- The quality of teaching is starting to improve. However, the work given to students is not always hard enough and sometimes fails to interest them.
- Marking and feedback to students do not always tell them what they need to do to improve.
- Students' behaviour is not always good, or managed consistently by teachers. A small minority of students are inattentive and those students take too little pride in their work.
- There is insufficient careers advice available to support students leaving the academy at age 16.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed executive principal is having an impact on the academy already. The culture is improving and staff welcome the greater direction and clear leadership being provided.
- Governors and school leaders have started to take action to improve the academy's effectiveness. There are signs that the action taken has started to improve students' achievement, but this is not evident in the 2014 results.
- Attendance and punctuality are better and the number of exclusions is decreasing.
- Students are articulate, considerate and reflective. They take part willingly in fundraising events, volunteer and mentor younger students.
- Students say that they feel safe at the academy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons taught by 24 teachers, of which two were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also visited 'Choices', the academy's inclusion centre, several tutor sessions, house assemblies, and the dining hall. Meetings and discussions were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, members of the senior leadership team, and curriculum leaders. They met with groups of students from all year groups, as well as representatives of the school council and house captains.
- The views of parents were gained from the 22 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's on-line questionnaire.
- Inspectors took account of the views of staff from the 34 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire, as well as from discussions with staff.
- The inspectors examined a range of documents relating to safeguarding and child protection, school improvement planning, self evaluation and departmental plans. They examined records of checks on students' work and others relating to behaviour and attendance. Inspectors considered the academy's arrangements for making the best use of pupil premium funding (additional government funding for disadvantaged students).

Inspection team

Judith Straw, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Martin

Additional Inspector

Alan Brewerton

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- Long Field Academy is a smaller than average-sized secondary school. It converted to become an academy on 1 September 2012. When its predecessor school, Long Field School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- The large majority of students are White British. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is well below average. Very few students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students eligible for support through the pupil premium, at just under a fifth, is below average.
- Just over a tenth of students is supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs. About an eighth of students is supported at school action. Both these proportions are slightly above those found nationally.
- A very small number of students attend alternative provision at the Nasai Hub in Nottingham and at Willowbank Hospital School.
- The academy meets the current government floor standards.
- The principal resigned in April 2014. The vice-principal managed the academy during the summer term as acting principal, supported by a part-time executive principal. The acting principal left in July 2014. The executive principal is now leading the academy, supported by three assistant principals.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to enable all students, particularly boys and the disadvantaged, to make better progress to reach the standards of which they are capable by ensuring that teachers:
 - set work that all students find demanding
 - plan activities that interest and engage students in their learning
 - provide feedback to students that tells them precisely how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve
 - implement the classroom behaviour policy consistently and fairly, in order to eliminate any low-level disruption.
- Strengthen leadership and management, so that very recent actions to bring about improvements in achievement, teaching and behaviour are secured and sustained by:
 - making certain that leaders at all levels are holding staff to account regularly and rigorously for the quality of their work
 - supporting teachers to improve, so that weaker elements of teaching are eliminated
 - ensuring that all staff apply the policies for behaviour, marking and assessment consistently
 - increasing the impact of the work of subject leaders to enable them to raise achievement
 - improving careers advice for students who leave at the age of 16 and ensuring they are well-prepared for life in modern Britain.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management **require improvement**

- In the recent past, self-evaluation was inaccurate. Data on students' progress were inaccurate and not used effectively to promote achievement. The quality of teaching was not monitored sufficiently well to identify and tackle weaknesses. Agreed policies on behaviour, marking and assessment were not implemented consistently by all staff. As a result, students' achievement has been inadequate and some students who left Year 11 in 2014 did not reach the standards of which they were capable.
- Subject leaders have not done enough to ensure that students make good progress. However, they are responding to the challenge of improving the achievement of all students. Supported by the executive principal, they have produced action plans which clearly acknowledge weaknesses and shortcomings that have to be addressed.
- The management of teaching is improving. Lead teachers have been appointed to develop a coaching programme to improve the quality of teaching. Salary progression is now linked clearly to teachers' contribution to students' achievement and to the academy's overall improvement. Systems for managing teachers' performance have been strengthened. These improvements have not yet resulted in addressing all inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.
- The academy's use of pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged students is increasingly effective. A range of strategies has been put into place and the spending of these funds has been analysed and incorporated into an 'action plan' for 2014/2015. The gap between the achievement of those students and that of other students narrowed in 2014, although this coincided with a decline in the achievement of the other students.
- The academy used part of the catch-up funding this year to provide a two-week summer school for new Year 7 students who did not achieve well at primary school. The focus was on literacy and numeracy and preparation for secondary school. Early indications are that these students are more settled than previous entrants and have already made small gains in their learning, rather than falling back. Students themselves are very enthusiastic about this experience.
- Teachers are contributing to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development with varying degrees of success. Students have a growing understanding of different faiths and beliefs. They know right from wrong. They receive sufficient guidance about choosing subjects, but not enough information about careers choices in preparation for leaving the academy. This means that they are not always well-prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The academy is reviewing the subjects taught, in order to meet the needs of students better, to provide a suitable curriculum and to promote better progress and achievement. More teaching time is being allocated to English and mathematics. There is an increased focus on personal, social and health education and citizenship to give students a wider understanding of local, national and international affairs.
- The executive principal is experienced and has a proven track record of securing school improvement. She has brought rigour and challenge and is establishing high expectations. The culture at the academy is changing. Staff morale is improving and teachers are responding positively to the clear direction they are now given.
- The three assistant principals are purposefully tackling inconsistencies in teachers' management of behaviour, promoting the achievement of disabled students and those who have special educational needs and using data about students' progress. This has already improved the ways in which teaching assistant support is targeted, attendance and general behaviour around school. Teachers now have more reliable data to help them to match tasks more effectively to students' targets.
- The very few students who attend alternative provision are well-supported. Academy leaders ensure their well-being and safety, in partnership with the other providers. Safeguarding arrangements and policies are

in place to keep pupils safe and secure.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors acted decisively to seek the expertise of an educational consultant for advice regarding the academy's improvement. Later, they appointed the consultant as executive principal. However, the changes they instigated came too late to reverse the fall in standards in 2013/2014.
- Governors have recently carried out a self-review and created an action plan to deepen their knowledge and understanding of how to support the academy further. They have sought external verification of assessment processes. They challenge all leaders and staff to make the changes and improvements necessary to secure good achievement for all students. They ensure that salary progression is only linked to success in teaching and achievement.
- Governors are well-aware of the academy's strengths and weaknesses. Through links with different departments in the academy, they are beginning to have a more-accurate picture of the quality of teaching, marking and behaviour. Governors have had training on the use of data and are able to compare the academy's performance with other schools' across the country. They are aware of the way in which funding is used to support disadvantaged students and that it has not had sufficient impact over the last two years.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Learning is hindered sometimes by the inattention and lack of interest shown by a few students. The low-level disruption caused by a small minority of students is not always handled consistently or effectively by staff. Some students show too little pride in the work in their books.
- In other respects, behaviour around the academy at breaks, lunchtimes, and between lessons, is generally good. The majority of students is responsive in class, contributes regularly to discussions and enjoys learning. The overwhelming majority is friendly, courteous and respectful to staff. Staff in the catering and maintenance departments say students speak to them with respect and are responsive to any requests. The academy is clean, well-maintained and free from litter and graffiti.
- The inclusion centre, 'Choices', has improved behaviour across the academy because those students who need extra support benefit from individual attention. Exclusions have reduced considerably because of this strategy and are now below average.
- Students do not receive enough careers advice and guidance to enable them to make informed choices about their options after leaving the academy. Students themselves identify this as a weakness and wish that they were given more support in this area.
- Attendance has been below average, but has recently improved to match the national average. This is partly because, students say that they enjoy school more and partly because of effective strategies to improve attendance. However, the attendance of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs remains lower than that of other pupils.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure requires improvement. During the inspection, some minor corrections were made to the academy's records. Nevertheless, students say that they feel safe and that bullying, should it occur, is dealt with by teachers. They indicate that there are few incidents of racism and the use of derogatory language associated with homophobia is rare. They feel well-informed about staying safe when using the internet or social media. The small number of parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire were unanimous that their children are safe at the academy.
- Students say that there has been an improvement in behaviour and attitudes since the executive principal joined the academy. Punctuality at the start of the day and to lessons is better now and most students are keen to learn. They feel that everyone is wearing school uniform with pride and knows what is expected of them, academically and socially.

- Students are enthusiastic about the house system, which they feel brings a real 'buzz' into the academy and a spirit of friendly competition. They enjoy being members of the four houses and the opportunities for leadership and enterprise that this creates. For example, there are weekly house competitions, when each house supports a chosen charity, and students compete keenly to gain house points.
- Most students make appropriate gains in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through assemblies and a range of lessons. The atmosphere in the academy is trusting and positive. Students say that they want to be part of making Long Field an exciting and positive place to learn.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching has not ensured that students reach the levels of which they are capable by the end of Year 11. Many students made less progress than they should in 2014 as a result.
- The quality of teaching is too variable across the academy. There are examples of good teaching, but, at other times, the presentation of activities is uninteresting, students are not challenged sufficiently and time is wasted.
- Inspection evidence, including the sampling of recent work in students' books, observations of lessons, and discussions with students of all ages, shows that, although there are signs of improvement, the quality of some teaching continues to hamper students' progress. In modern foreign languages, for example, teachers do not ensure that students' work is tidy or finished.
- The management of behaviour in some classrooms is not as good as it should be. This is because inattentiveness is not addressed quickly enough and clear academy policies about dealing with behaviour are not applied across all subject areas.
- Marking is inconsistent. A review of students' work in the previous academic year showed that, too often, students did not get enough feedback from teachers to help them to improve their work and some took little pride in their work. This term, there is evidence that students are beginning to respond to comments and there is good practice in the humanities subjects, but this is not yet the case in all subjects.
- Assessment processes have been updated recently. Teachers are, increasingly, using information about students to plan work at the right level. The executive principal is fostering a growing sense of higher academic expectations. Examples of this were seen in Year 11 mathematics, when students were explaining their understanding of simultaneous equations confidently.
- The academy has reviewed the way teaching assistants are deployed this year. They make a more effective contribution now to the learning of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Teachers promote the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through their lessons and subjects. Inspectors saw students who were, for example, comparing the role of women in society in earlier centuries with the modern world and developing an understanding of the impact of racism, discrimination and poverty.

The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- In 2012-13, the first year of the academy, the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A*-C, including English and mathematics, was just above the national average. However, the proportion of these students making expected progress was average in English and below average in mathematics. In the current year, unpublished data for 2013-14 show standards fell and progress was inadequate in English and mathematics.
- From their starting points in Year 7, many students have not made enough progress over time. Subjects

where students have underperformed include mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics, and English. Students make the best progress and achieve well in humanities subjects and physical education. Scrutiny of students' current work in English and modern foreign languages show that some do not take enough care when completing their work and their progress remains weak.

- In 2013, boys did far less well than girls in many subjects. Students of middle-ability did less well in mathematics. Overall, progress is slower in mathematics and the sciences, than in English. The proportion of students gaining A* and A passes at GCSE is low.
- The gap between the achievement of disadvantaged students and other students in the academy increased in 2013, in both English and mathematics. Disadvantaged students achieved over one full GCSE grade lower than other students in the academy. Unpublished data for 2014 indicate that this gap has narrowed.
- In 2014, Year 11 students were entered early for examinations in English and mathematics. This had a negative impact and contributed to the inadequate achievement, because many students were not motivated to achieve even more. The academy no longer uses early entry in any subject.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs at school action plus did not make enough progress, relative to their starting points, particularly in mathematics in 2013. However, those supported by a statement of special educational needs made better progress in both English and mathematics. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are receiving increased and better targeted support from teaching assistants.
- Generally, the most-able students made the progress expected in 2013. Few of these pupils make accelerated progress because they are not always challenged by the work set for them. However, there are initiatives to challenge and support the highest attainers. For example, there is an option to complete the AS extended project in place of another GCSE course. Last year, students were successful in this, with many gaining an A* or A pass.

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	138628
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	449208

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy Converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	580
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Marriott
Principal	Jill Hislop (Executive Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01664 561234
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