

Longridge High School

Preston Road, Longridge, Preston, Lancashire, PR3 3AR

Inspection dates

10–11 November 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement varies across the school and requires improvement. Pupils' progress is sluggish particularly in English, mathematics, science and for specific groups including the most-able and disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils have limited opportunities to develop problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics.
- Senior leaders and governors do not check and evaluate the impact of the school's day-to-day work with enough rigour to yield good achievement for all groups of pupils.
- Leaders' evaluation of teaching and learning is not always accurate. Guidance on improvements is not centred on pupils' achievement.
- Not all leaders are skilled in driving improvement effectively, which hampers better achievement. Weaknesses are not pinpointed consistently well and, likewise, good practice is not always identified and shared among teachers.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good. Teachers' expectations of pupils vary and work often lacks the right level of challenge. Activities in lessons do not always match pupils' starting points and potential.
- Teachers' feedback is not always incisive or specific enough to improve or deepen pupils' understanding.
- Teachers' judgements on attainment and progress are not always accurate, which makes it difficult for leaders to know exactly how well pupils are doing.
- Reading and numeracy support programmes are underdeveloped and are not having a strong enough impact on pupils' achievement.
- Levels of attendance and persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils are not good compared to figures for other pupils in the school and nationally.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders' work to support the personal welfare of pupils is good. Effective partnerships with other services support vulnerable pupils.
- Pupils enjoy school and show pride in it. They behave well in lessons and around the school, contributing to the school's orderly environment.
- The school promotes harmonious relationships between pupils and with staff. Opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are woven strongly across the school's curriculum.
- Pockets of good practice in teaching and learning exist across the school, for example in business studies and textiles.
- The school provides good impartial careers guidance so that pupils make appropriate choices about the next stage of their education, employment and training.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and accelerate the progress of all pupils throughout Years 7 to 11 by:
 - increasing the levels of challenge for, and teachers' expectations of, all pupils
 - ensuring that learning activities are consistently matched to pupils' abilities
 - providing pupils, particularly the most able, with work which ignites their enthusiasm and stretches them to do their best
 - giving pupils specific, incisive feedback which informs the next steps on how to improve or deepen their understanding
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics
 - ensuring that reading and numeracy support programmes are planned and delivered effectively.

- Ensure that senior leaders intensify their efforts to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, especially those who are absent persistently from school.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by ensuring that:
 - all leaders are equipped with the skills to drive improvement in teaching, learning and assessment
 - all leaders accurately evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to bring about swift improvements and to identify and share good practice
 - leaders and governors check and robustly evaluate the impact of the school's day-to-day work and initiatives to drive improvement.

- Improve the accuracy and use of assessment, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - follow the school's marking policy to plan effective next steps for learning, making it clear to pupils what they need to do to improve or extend their learning
 - assess pupils' attainment and progress accurately.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- The actions taken by senior leaders and governors to tackle the variation in pupils' achievement have not yet resulted in good achievement for all groups of pupils.
- Senior and middle leaders have not ensured that all teachers implement school policies and initiatives consistently well. For example, not all teachers mark pupils' work in line with the school's policy. Consequently, teachers do not always provide pupils with incisive or specific feedback to improve or deepen pupils' understanding and thereby strengthen their progress. As a result, this contributes to pupils' slower progress.
- Senior and middle leaders do not monitor pupils' progress accurately enough, or evaluate teaching and learning effectively, to ensure that strengths and weaknesses are pinpointed precisely and judgements are a true reflection of quality. This led to an over-generous judgement on teaching and learning across the school.
- The school's self-evaluation of its work is overly rosy and has prevented better rooting out of the causes of a stagnating picture of outcomes for pupils. Not all leaders are equipped with the right skills or knowledge to drive improvement in their areas of responsibility. This is particularly evident in relation to subject leadership of teaching and learning, where developments are in the early stages. As a result, some teachers are not supported effectively with their own development and this, in turn, impedes improvement in pupils' achievement.
- Not all teachers are confident in using the school's new assessment system. Consequently, judgements on pupils' performance are not consistently accurate, and predictions on pupils' external examination performance are sometimes imprecise.
- Staff have individual performance targets linked to the school's development plan. More recently, these have been focused on ensuring that the pupils they teach, and particular groups of pupils, make good progress. Although there has been some improvement in mathematics and humanities, progress for all pupils is not yet consistently good.
- An external review has been undertaken on the allocation and use of the pupil premium fund. This fund is used to provide a range of enrichment activities and academic support for disadvantaged pupils. However, these pupils are not yet making good progress.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, with a wide range of different subjects at Key Stage 4. As a result, very few pupils who leave Year 11 are not in education, employment or training. The school holds full discussions with parents about pupils' curriculum choices and how these affect their life learning plans. The school supports pupils' career choices, plans and thinking about careers by providing access to an online careers package from Year 7 onwards. Leaders also provide appropriate careers education lessons for all pupils, coupled with specific impartial advice through one-to-one interviews during Key Stage 4. Good connections are made with local providers for apprenticeships and a well-established careers fair further supports pupils' career choice routes.
- Leaders support newly qualified teachers and trainee teachers well.
- The headteacher is strongly supported by the appointment of a new deputy headteacher who is sharply focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- As a result of good leadership, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported across the school. The special educational needs coordinator and the inclusion manager work closely together to ensure teaching assistants support pupils effectively; pupils' needs are clearly explained to all teachers. Teaching assistants are trained to track and mentor pupils with care and sensitivity. Better achievement is now developing across the school for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- The local authority provides appropriate support for this school. Senior leaders have started to broker 'school to school' support for some middle leaders to improve the accuracy of assessments.
- The online questionnaires reveal that the headteacher has the confidence of parents and staff. A few parents used the Parent View online questionnaire to share concerns about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Inspectors found that inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning across the school is impeding pupils' progress.
- The behaviour, attendance and progress of pupils studying off-site are monitored closely so that pupils attend well and are kept safe. These pupils' courses are matched well to their needs.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure meets statutory requirements. Leaders ensure that staff are suitably trained in safeguarding practices and

procedures. For example, all teachers have completed online training on 'Prevent', increasing their knowledge on how to safeguard pupils from the threat of terrorism and radicalisation.

■ **The governance of the school**

- Governance requires improvement because the governing body does not carry out sufficient rigorous checks on the school's work, initiatives to drive improvement and approaches undertaken to promote good progress.
- The governing body has not made sure the school meets all the statutory duties. The website, for example, on the first day of the inspection, did not meet statutory regulations. However, governors and leaders took swift action during the inspection to make the necessary amendments.
- Governors monitor pupils' behaviour and academic progress against targets and are trained to understand this information. However, senior leaders have not provided accurate information on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to governors. Consequently, governors do not have a true and clear grasp of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Governors are poised to improve the rigour and impact of their work. A recent informal review of governance has led to an action plan and an improving match of expertise, skills and knowledge to roles.
- Governors do not shy away from hard decisions about staffing when teachers fail to respond to advice and guidance. Governors support the headteacher in her quest for high-calibre teachers.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because the quality of teaching is variable in pockets across the school and does not lead to good progress in all subjects. The school's assessment data show that more pupils are now making better progress. However, this more positive picture was not reflected in much of pupils' work in their books or in the lessons observed.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good across and within subjects and for different groups of pupils. For example, teaching in modern foreign languages and resistant materials showed weaknesses in the use of the target language. In mathematics, teachers' introductions to topics generally help pupils to understand. Worked examples are usually chosen carefully but the exercises that follow are frequently so similar that pupils do not have to think hard for themselves. Pupils do not have routine opportunities to solve problems and rarely reason about the mathematics they are learning. Not all leaders recognise such shortcomings in teaching and provide teachers with guidance on how to improve.
- Not enough teachers have sufficiently high expectations for pupils. Some teachers do not provide enough challenge for the most-able pupils; learning activities do not always suit pupils' abilities. Consequently, pupils do not complete enough work in class and do not make leaps of progress towards their targets.
- Pupils who arrive with the lowest reading levels are not identified swiftly enough. A lag in starting the reading recovery programme has hindered developments in reading. The coordinators for special educational needs and literacy have not worked closely together to ensure pupils are able to decode and use phonics with high-frequency words.
- Numeracy support is not managed strategically. Because the gaps, difficulties and misconceptions of individual pupils who arrive with the lowest mathematical skills are not identified and then tackled through the programme, they do not make the necessary rapid gains in their understanding and skills.
- Where teaching is not as strong, teachers do not match pupils' abilities to learning activities that engage and inspire a natural thirst and curiosity for learning. Pupils' progress is impeded when teachers do not recognise some pupils' high levels of prior knowledge before engaging on new learning, and these pupils are left to tread water while others catch up.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have ensured that the new whole-school marking policy is used to engage pupils in their own understanding and development. While the quality of marking has improved notably, some feedback is not subject-specific or incisive enough to deepen pupils' understanding. Some pupils respond to teachers' good advice and make further progress as a result but this is not yet an established routine across the school. Opportunities are therefore lost for pupils to clarify misunderstandings or become more confident about or challenged in their learning.
- Some teaching leads to effective learning, for instance in business studies and textiles. Skilful questioning and well-designed tasks enable pupils of different needs and starting points to develop their knowledge and understanding. Pupils become immersed in their learning, and their enthusiasm is evident in their written work.
- The impact of teaching assistants' work in lessons is effective and helps to forge pupils' good progress, for

instance in science and English lessons. Some teaching assistants were observed providing support for pupils through skilful questioning, drawing on their own secure subject knowledge.

- Pupils work diligently in lessons. They have a clear view of what is expected of them and involve themselves in their own learning. Most present their work with pride.
- Teaching assistants are provided with clear guidance from the special educational needs coordinator and in lessons with subject teachers. Effective programmes of provision for pupils with special educational needs are implemented.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils display good attitudes to learning in lessons; the best lessons captivated pupils and provided a thirst for learning.
- Teachers work hard to foster strong relationships with all pupils. Respect and tolerance permeates the school.
- Pastoral leaders ensure that pupils receive important information on issues including drugs and safety on the internet through 'life education' lessons, coupled with tutor sessions and assemblies. Pupils speak confidently about their understanding of different risks. For example, pupils feel able to avoid the risks associated with social media and the internet.
- Pastoral leaders and form tutors encourage pupils to widen their personal experiences and build new skills and knowledge through participating in school-wide competitions, which are organised through the house system.
- Pupils are keen to serve the school and wider community, and are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They have opportunities to use a range of social skills within different contexts including community projects and fundraising. International links are undertaken to develop pupils' understanding of other cultures, for example through the 'Ghana exchange', where overseas teachers share their school's learning. Leaders and teachers strongly promote and build pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through a planned programme across the school.
- Pupils are encouraged to take part in all aspects of school life. They can choose from a range of extra-curricular opportunities including the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Celebrations of pupils' achievements and active citizenship are frequently communicated using social media, school newsletters to parents and through corridor displays and formal assemblies.
- The school provides a well-structured and safe environment for learning. Pupils surveyed said that bullying is rare and that they are confident teachers would react quickly and firmly when it is reported.
- The school works well with external agencies to ensure that support for vulnerable pupils meets their needs. Identified pupils have access to a small on-site learning unit, 'STEPS', for additional one-to-one learning, and there is a breakfast club.
- All safeguarding requirements are met. Pupils who attend courses off-site are kept safe.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils take pride in the school and their uniform. They conduct themselves well throughout the school day. Of those parents, staff and pupils who completed the online survey, the large majority said that behaviour in the school is good.
- The school environment is calm and orderly; pupils respond quickly and respectfully to staff. Behaviour incidents and the number of school exclusions have declined. Disruptions to learning are rare. Occasional flare-ups in behaviour in lessons or around the site are managed well, with pupils spending some time in a reflection room, 'New Start', where their learning continues supported by a behaviour mentor.
- New structures to enhance pupils' behaviour have made a significant difference. Pupils spoke favourably about the consistency and fairness of the new expectations and the leadership behind these changes.
- Leaders promote the importance of attendance and this is reflected positively in the overall attendance. However, leaders are not having enough impact on improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and reducing the number whose absence is persistent.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because too few pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Progress, especially in mathematics, English and science, is not rapid enough. There has been a decline in progress over time.
- In the last couple of years, attainment at GCSE has declined but has been above the national average in English and mathematics, and in the proportion gaining five or more GCSE grades at A* to C including English and mathematics. However, the proportion of pupils attaining high grades in most subjects at GCSE is too low.
- The most-able pupils do not make good progress in English, mathematics or science. Current pupils' assessment information and work in books show that the most-able pupils in Years 7 to 11 do not make the progress they should in a wide range of subjects.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs currently on roll is improving in most years, and is moving towards that of other pupils who have the same starting points.
- In 2014 and 2015, there were large gaps between the performances of disadvantaged and other pupils in English and mathematics GCSE. In mathematics in 2014, the gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school and nationally was just over a GCSE grade. In English, the in-school gap was around two thirds of a grade and the national gap was one third of a grade. From their starting points in Year 7, disadvantaged pupils of all abilities made less progress than other pupils in the school and nationally. The school's tracking information shows that the gap is narrowing for pupils currently in the school.
- Pupils who need additional support for their literacy skills were not supported well in the past. A reading recovery programme has just started, with the aim of helping all pupils read with fluency and comprehension.
- Teachers' judgements on pupils' attainment are too generous, which affects leaders' ability to measure progress for each pupil in the school, and form an overall picture for individual subjects, groups and cohorts. There is not enough external moderation and validation to improve teachers' skills in making accurate judgements.
- All pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training and employment. The proportion of pupils progressing to education establishments, apprenticeships, employment or training is well above average.
- Senior leaders and governors have taken appropriate action recently to bring about improvement in some subjects, for example in English language, mathematics, humanities and science, but this is yet to have the desired impact on pupils' outcomes.

School details

Unique reference number	119749
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10002915

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	725
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr J K Ackers
Headteacher	Jane Green
Telephone number	01772 782316
Website	www.longridge-high.co.uk
Email address	admin@longridge-high.lancsngfl.ac.uk
Date of previous inspection	2–3 November 2011

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller-than-average 11–16 secondary school with specialisms of mathematics and computing and also a rural dimension.
- There have been some changes to the senior leadership team since the previous inspection.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below the national average. Pupil premium funding is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- Pupils are predominantly of White British heritage with the rest of the school population spread evenly between pupils from other heritages.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is much smaller than the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- A very small number of pupils are educated off-site at Larches House School, a pupil referral unit.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in most subjects and all year groups, including four lesson observations that were undertaken jointly with senior leaders and two with a subject leader. Learning walks to observe teaching and learning were also conducted by inspectors.
- Meetings and formal discussions took place with the headteacher, senior leaders, members of the governing body, groups of staff, middle leaders and a group of pupils from Years 7 to 11. Inspectors also spoke by telephone to an officer from the local authority and with a member of staff from the external educational provision.
- Informal discussions were held with pupils at breaktime, lunchtime and around the school to gather their views about behaviour and learning.
- Inspectors viewed registration periods and an assembly, and made visits to the school's internal inclusion unit.
- Inspectors scrutinised the work in some pupils' books in all lessons observed during the inspection. A further scrutiny of work was undertaken in which inspectors sampled pupils' work across a wide range of subjects in Years 8 and 11.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and action plans for 2015/16, minutes of governors' meetings, information relating to teachers' appraisal, information about pupils' attainment and progress, and records relating to pupils' behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Meetings were held with qualified teachers, including teachers who are newly qualified, and those undertaking training at the school.
- Inspectors took into account the 91 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) along with the 20 responses to the online staff questionnaire and 400 responses to the online pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Dawn Platt, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jane Jones	Her Majesty's Inspector
Neil Mackenzie	Her Majesty's Inspector
Fiona Burke-Jackson	Ofsted Inspector
James Robinson	Ofsted Inspector

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