

Longley School

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

Inspection dates

29–30 September 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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress in a wide range of subjects.
- Assessment information is not used well enough by all teachers. As a result, work is not always pitched at just the right level for pupils.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils will learn in lessons are not always clear or precise enough. This means that teachers do not always know whether pupils are making fast enough progress.
- Some pupils with very specific needs require more expert help in order to communicate what they know, understand and can do.
- When planning improvement work, leaders do not make the most of the information they routinely collect about the quality of teaching.
- The information and reports governors receive sometimes lack the detail necessary to enable them to question or challenge leaders with sufficient rigour.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' progress in English and mathematics has improved since the last inspection. In these subjects, teachers have higher expectations which are reflected in more challenging targets for individual pupils.
- Pupils' conduct and their attitudes to learning are consistently good. Pupils' safety and welfare is promoted effectively.
- The support older pupils receive helps them to be well prepared for the next stage of their education and training.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that clarity about what pupils are expected to know, understand and do becomes the norm in all lessons and subjects
 - making certain that teachers take account of pupils' prior learning so that lessons are closely matched to their interests, needs and levels of ability
 - making sure that all teachers have the necessary knowledge, skills and experience to effectively meet the needs of pupils with a wide range of communication needs.

- Improve pupils' progress so that their learning and development in all subjects matches their improved progress in English and mathematics.

- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - improving the quality and accuracy of leaders' evaluation of key areas of school performance so that they can pinpoint weaknesses and drive improvement
 - ensuring that governors hold senior leaders to account by expecting more detailed and in-depth monitoring information which they systematically interrogate and question.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Although senior leaders routinely monitor the quality of important aspects of the school's work, they do not systematically check whether this gives them an accurate or rounded enough view of the school's effectiveness. For example, they do not regularly check whether their view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, based on observations in lessons, matches measures of pupils' progress and the quality of work in their books and folders.
- Similarly, senior and middle leaders do not always interrogate the information they collect in sufficient depth to pinpoint the key strengths and weaknesses in teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, the school's improvement plan does not identify with enough precision what actions leaders will take to secure consistently good teaching.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have established a culture of positive behaviour and good attitudes to learning. This improvement is underpinned by high expectations, a sharp focus on improving practice and a determined drive for consistency. In this area, and in many others, senior leaders have secured the strong support of staff who say that they feel proud to work at Longley School.
- Longley's curriculum has been redesigned in response to the school's changing pupil population. The new curriculum, introduced very recently, is better matched to pupils' needs. It is enhanced by a good range of additional activities outside formal lessons, for example, visits to art galleries and museums and activities linked to World Book Day and Science Week.
- Additional funding, including the pupil premium and the physical education and sport premium for primary-aged pupils, is used to enhance the curriculum. This includes lunchtime activities led by sports coaches and additional teaching for pupils who need help to catch up. However, because leaders and governors do not systematically evaluate the impact of these activities, they do not always know whether they are delivering good or improved outcomes for disadvantaged pupils or those who need additional help.
- Pupils' social and moral development is supported effectively by the school's strong focus on positive behaviour and good attitudes to learning. Pupils learn about Britain's cultural heritage and the diversity of cultures and faiths in the communities where they live. This helps them to be well prepared for the next stage of their lives.
- Senior leaders and governors do not use performance management effectively enough to secure improvement in teachers' practice because they do not take enough account of teachers' career stage or their level of responsibility when they set targets for improvement.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Some governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, have joined the governing body since the previous inspection.
 - While governors are committed to the school and are ambitious for pupils, they have not held senior leaders rigorously to account. Governors do not ask for detailed enough information and reports from senior leaders. Nor do they always ask searching enough questions about different aspects of the school's work.
 - The local authority has only recently brokered external support for the school from a national leader of education. The local authority has not kept a close enough eye on Longley School since the last inspection.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and staff know each pupil well. They are alert to the risks associated with abuse, neglect and exploitation. Records show that concerns are reported quickly and that timely action is taken to protect pupils who are at risk. The school's work is supported by strong local partnerships.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved since the last inspection but is not consistently good.
- Teachers do not always use assessment information to plan lessons and learning activities which are closely matched to pupils' interests, needs and levels of ability. Practice is stronger in English and

mathematics, where teachers' subject knowledge is more secure; assessments are more accurate and systems to support target setting and tracking are more effective.

- Expectations of what pupils will learn in lessons are not always clear or precise enough. Teachers' planning does not consistently identify the knowledge, skills or understanding they expect pupils will acquire, develop or consolidate in lessons. As a consequence, they are sometimes unable to check whether pupils have made enough progress or to plan subsequent steps in their learning.
- Pupils make good progress in lessons when teachers question them skilfully and give them time to think and talk about what they are learning. For example, in a mathematics lesson, a group of most-able pupils confidently described the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes because the teacher gave them time to explore a range of shapes and asked good questions. These challenged pupils to use the correct mathematical language and explain what they were thinking.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour in lessons well. Pupils know what is expected of them; they respond positively to teachers' consistently clear boundaries and to the praise and rewards they receive. Isolated incidents of more challenging behaviour are well managed by teachers, who skilfully de-escalate difficult situations and quickly get pupils back on track.
- The support pupils receive to help them to communicate their knowledge, skills and understanding is not always effective. Teachers show pupils how to complete a task by modelling or demonstrating it to them, but they do not always give enough attention to the subject-specific and social language associated with the task. As a consequence, some pupils with very specific needs do not acquire or develop the necessary language for communicating confidently about what they are learning.
- Other adults help pupils to engage with learning activities, maintain their interest and concentrate well in lessons. However, their contribution to pupils' learning and progress is sometimes less effective. This is because they do not always know what each pupil is expected to learn or how to help them take the next step.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently good. In lessons, pupils work hard, sustain their concentration and are persistent when they struggle or get stuck. Pupils' pride in their successes and achievements is clearly evident in their work and in their responses to the praise and rewards they receive.
- Leaders give a high priority to preparing pupils for the next stage of education or training. A well-developed programme of careers guidance helps pupils and parents to make good decisions about the next stage of their education. A very high proportion of pupils transfer successfully to further education and training.
- Good attendance is promoted effectively and leaders intervene quickly when they have concerns about a pupil's level of absence. As a result, attendance has improved and levels of persistent absence have reduced. Both are now broadly in line with the national averages for primary and secondary schools.
- Pupils' welfare and safety are at the heart of the school's work. Pupils say that they feel safe at Longley. They know what to do if they feel unhappy or unsafe and are confident that, if they tell someone, it will 'get sorted out'.
- Some older pupils work on construction projects at the Chestnut Centre, an off-site workshop. Practical activities have a strong emphasis on pupils' safety and welfare. While there is a good level of supervision for these activities, pupils are encouraged to be independent and to learn how to work safely.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders have high expectations of pupils and there has been a marked improvement in behaviour since the last inspection. Pupils have responded positively to the school's higher expectations and clearer boundaries. They know what is right and wrong. Pupils routinely follow adult direction and conduct themselves well throughout the school day.
- The school's records show that incidents of aggressive or challenging behaviour, bullying and use of derogatory language have reduced. Pupils can describe what constitutes bullying and understand its

consequences. Teachers and other adults are alert to the signs of bullying and intervene quickly if they have concerns.

- Pupils consistently show respect for equipment, resources and the school environment when they are in lessons, and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils' achievements are not improving as quickly in all their subjects as is the case in English and mathematics. Improvements in teaching mean that pupils are making good gains in their learning from different starting points in English, particularly in reading, and in mathematics. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making the fastest progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils, the most- and least-able pupils, and those with a wide range of special educational needs make similarly good progress in English and mathematics.
- Inspectors' observations in lessons and the scrutiny of pupils' work show that rates of progress in different subjects are variable. Pupils' work and teachers' records show that pupils are developing their knowledge, skills and understanding in a wide range of subjects at different rates; consistently good progress is not the norm in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- The quality of assessment information in subjects other than English and mathematics shows some weaknesses. Therefore, leaders cannot confidently say whether individual pupils or groups of pupils make fast enough progress in all subjects.
- Pupils work towards accredited courses in Years 10 and 11. In 2015, nine pupils achieved a GCSE qualification in art and design, six at grades A* to C. In addition, Year 11 pupils achieved Entry Level Certificates in mathematics, English, computing, art and design, religious studies, and preparation for working life.
- Pupils develop the knowledge, skills, understanding and confidence they need to be well prepared for the next stage of their education. They are supported effectively through the school's personal, social, health and citizenship (PSHC) programme and through careers guidance, work experience, work-related learning and enterprise activities. A very high proportion of Year 11 pupils transfer successfully to further education and training.

School details

Unique reference number	107797
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10002120

This inspection 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	129
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Pruchniewicz
Headteacher	Anne Lawton
Telephone number	01484 223937
Website	www.longleyschool.org.uk
Email address	office.longley@kirkleeseducation.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 September 2013

Information about this school

- Longley is a local authority maintained special school for children and young people aged from five to 16 years. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- Longley has recently been redesignated as a five to 19 school for children and young people with autism. The school's new post-16 provision will open in September 2016.
- There are twice as many pupils as the national average from minority ethnic groups and whose first language is not English.
- There are nearly four times as many boys as girls in the school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is much higher than the national average.
- The school provides opportunities for older pupils to work on construction projects at an off-site workshop, the Chestnut Centre.
- The headteacher has been in post since April 2014.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 15 lessons, 10 of which were observed jointly with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and examined information about pupils' progress and samples of their work.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentary evidence, including reports and checks on how well the school is doing, its development plans, safeguarding arrangements and minutes of meetings held by the governing body.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other leaders, pupils, parents and members of the governing body. Inspectors spoke to a representative from the local authority and to the local authority's designated officer for child protection.
- Inspectors held meetings with pupils and parents, considered the information recorded on Parent View and took account of 58 staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors visited the Chestnut Centre, the school's off-site workshop.

Inspection team

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