

Longfield Academy

Main Road, Longfield, Kent DA3 7PH

Inspection dates

17–18 April 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders and governors are ambitious for the school and its pupils. Governors provide a good balance of support and challenge to school leaders.
- There is a very effective safeguarding culture in the school. The college system provides good pastoral care and helps to build effective links with parents and carers.
- Leaders evaluate accurately the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Following GCSE results in 2017, leaders took swift and effective action to ensure that pupils' progress accelerated.
- The curriculum enables pupils to pursue their interests and prepares them well for their next steps. The range of extra-curricular opportunities is valued by pupils.
- The school is well supported by the multi-academy trust, which provides important support in, for example, teacher recruitment, development and training.
- Leaders' analysis of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress is not consistently reliable. Some variation in the quality of teaching remains.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Disruption to learning is rare. Strong relationships with staff help pupils feel secure and promote their personal development well.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are making good progress from their starting points. They are cared for well by teachers and other adults so that they can access learning effectively.
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are making better progress than they did in the recent past.
- Teachers plan work that enables most pupils to learn well in a range of subjects. However, levels of challenge for most-able pupils are not consistently high.
- Provision in the sixth form is outstanding. Highly effective leadership ensures that students have study programmes very well suited to their needs, resulting in excellent progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that leaders analyse information about the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils more critically, so they evaluate the impact of actions taken to improve standards more accurately.
- Improve the consistency of the quality of teaching and learning and the impact it has on most-able and disadvantaged pupils' learning, by ensuring that:
 - teachers use assessment information more precisely to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses in all curriculum areas, and plan their next steps reliably
 - teaching provides greater challenge to pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and governors have high aspirations for the school and its pupils. The school has a strong focus on pupils developing personal skills and being prepared for life in addition to achieving well in public examinations.
- Throughout the school, staff are hard-working and committed to ensuring that pupils thrive, feel safe and make good progress. The learning environment provides a secure and stimulating place for pupils to learn and develop.
- The school is supported well by the trust in successfully recruiting, developing and retaining high-quality leaders and teachers. Strong links with other secondary schools in the trust enable leaders and teachers to improve their skills.
- Leaders understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Following GCSE results in 2017, they have taken swift and effective action to ensure that pupils' progress has accelerated. Leaders have been firm, for example, in making necessary staffing changes, reviewing and improving the curriculum, and providing better support for middle leaders.
- Staff feel well supported and appreciate the range of training and professional development opportunities. They say they value the weekly professional development sessions the school provides. Newly qualified teachers and those new to the school are highly positive about the support they receive.
- Although systems and policies for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning have been improved, there has not been enough time to embed consistently strong practice in all areas. As a result, some variation in the quality of teaching persists across and within subjects. Leaders are reviewing systems to assess and record pupils' progress, to ensure that clear information is available about pupils' learning through the curriculum.
- Leaders gather a range of information about the quality of teaching and learning and the progress of pupils. However, they do not analyse this information precisely enough to understand the impact of particular actions they have taken to raise standards.
- Additional funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is spent effectively to improve their progress. Leaders make sure that these pupils are given focused and appropriate support to address their specific learning needs.
- Leaders use the catch-up funding in Year 7 well to improve pupils' reading and develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Effective reading programmes result, which help pupils read more widely and confidently.
- Leaders have successfully raised teachers' expectations for most-able pupils' achievement. They recognise that the most able pupils' progress needs to accelerate further and have firm plans in place to further develop their success.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding increasingly effectively to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils, for example by improving their attendance and providing extra tuition to help address gaps in their knowledge. The impact of these actions is seen in the better progress being made by current disadvantaged pupils, although they do not

yet attain as well as their peers nationally when compared to 2017 benchmarks.

- The curriculum is enriched by a range of extra-curricular provision which is valued by pupils, especially in sport and the performing arts. For example, pupils enjoy contributing to the school's production of musicals such as 'Footloose'.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. They have a clear understanding of fundamental British values through the lessons, assemblies and tutor-time activities they attend. Many subjects contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by raising their awareness of other cultures, reflecting on threats to the natural world, and discussing moral dilemmas. For example, during a tutor period pupils were seen making considered contributions to a discussion about military intervention.

Governance of the school

- Members of the governing body and leaders of the trust share the principal's ambition. They are focused on driving continued improvements in the effectiveness of the school's work and on pupils' achievements, attendance and well-being.
- Governors challenge and support leaders well. They monitor achievement and ask pertinent questions about underperformance. The governing body understands how the pupil premium and catch-up funding are used and monitors how well additional funding is spent. Governors are also clear about how extra funding supports those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively. They undertake regular training relating to their role. They also rigorously oversee the school's work to keep pupils safe.

Safeguarding

- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Safer recruitment practices are followed carefully. Staff are well trained, well informed and vigilant in identifying and reporting any concerns they might have. All staff receive annual safeguarding training, and procedures within the school are in place to ensure pupils' safety. Where referrals are required as a result of a concern raised, leaders take swift action to involve external agencies. Records show that referrals are followed up appropriately.
- Pupils are taught about keeping themselves safe and made aware of risks to their well-being through assemblies, tutor periods, and in a range of lessons across the curriculum. For example, 'Longfield learner lessons' in Year 7 cover online safety, healthy eating, and the risks associated with smoking.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching and learning is improving. Teachers generally have high expectations and expect pupils to do their best.
- Teachers show enthusiasm for their subject. They have strong subject knowledge and engage pupils in learning well. They typically create an atmosphere in lessons that

supports pupils in making good progress. Pupils settle to their work quickly. Teachers have established effective classroom routines, so that lessons proceed smoothly. Pupils listen to teachers and each other respectfully, and many pupils are confident to share their ideas.

- Teaching is usually well managed and purposeful. A range of activities helps pupils to maintain concentration. For example, in a Year 8 mathematics lesson pupils were learning about probability and making predictions about how a die would land. Where teaching leads to good or better achievement, pupils develop their understanding well and are encouraged to think deeply.
- In the most effective examples of learning, teachers use their strong subject knowledge to challenge and deepen pupils' understanding. The impact of this was seen, for example, in English, where Year 7 pupils demonstrated their understanding of the technique of 'foreshadowing' as used in the myth of Daedalus and Icarus.
- Teaching promotes the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities well. This is because the support provided meets their needs, ensuring that they can overcome difficulties that act as barriers to their learning.
- The majority of teachers give pupils helpful feedback in line with the school's policy. However, at times, the school policy is not followed carefully enough. Where pupils learn well, they make good use of the time they are given to reflect on their next steps and make any necessary improvements to their work.
- Occasionally, where teaching is less effective, pupils do not consolidate their learning before moving on to the next activity. Sometimes, the most able pupils do not benefit from sufficiently challenging tasks and so do not make the progress of which they are capable. This includes most-able pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pastoral staff are alert to difficulties faced by pupils and offer effective support. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe, including when using the internet.
- Staff cater well for pupils' physical and emotional well-being and create strong links with families. Pupils said that they feel happy and safe at school, and parents agree. Most parents are very positive about the care that their children receive while at school. As one parent said: 'Great pastoral care and school finds a special niche or talent in every child and certainly strives to help each child... surpass and gain confidence to excel in their chosen field.'
- Pupils trust the adults in school and say that their concerns are taken seriously. Pupils say that bullying is rare. If bullying does occur, staff deal with it quickly and effectively. Pupils know where to get help if they have a problem.
- Effective careers education and guidance throughout the school are helping to raise the aspirations of pupils. Useful links with a range of different providers, including local businesses, enhance this provision. Because of strong guidance, almost all pupils from

the school move on to appropriate further education, employment or training.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school is a calm and orderly environment. Pupils follow instructions without fuss and their conduct conforms to the high expectations of the school. They show care and respect for others as they move around the school. Pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes is good, even when they are not being directly supervised.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and pupils respond well as a result. Pupils wear their uniform smartly and are well equipped for lessons. They are proud of their school and the work that they do. Pupils are polite and show consideration for others. They are punctual to lessons and are ready to get on with their learning as soon as they arrive. Pupils settle to tasks quickly as they are used to the established routines.
- The attendance of current pupils is good. The school has worked effectively with individual families to improve the attendance of pupils for whom there is a cause for concern. Fixed-term exclusions have fallen over the last three years and are now below the national average.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision. The school tracks their attendance and progress regularly, working with these providers and other external agencies to ensure that the individual programmes address the pupils' needs well.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils currently in the school are making good progress. This is because good teaching is allowing them to develop secure knowledge, understanding and skills in many of the subjects they study. The school's performance information shows that outcomes are rising and, overall, progress is good.
- Outcomes in 2016 GCSEs suggested pupils were making progress in line with other pupils nationally. However, in 2017, pupils did not achieve as well as they should have by the end of key stage 4. The proportion of pupils who made good progress over their time at the school was below the national average in 2017.
- Leaders have taken swift and effective action to ensure that pupils are making better progress now. Pupils are making more than expected progress towards their targets in a wide range of subjects and standards are rising.
- Pupils' learning in English and humanities is a strength. Leaders' effective action in developing the curriculum and further increasing the levels of challenge can be seen in the good progress pupils are making in English this year. Careful planning and precise feedback are helping pupils to progress well from their starting points. Work in books shows high standards, linked to teachers' emphasis on extended writing.
- Learning and progress are improving, particularly in mathematics, modern foreign languages and science.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is used effectively to help pupils with low literacy skills to

improve their reading and writing. As a result, many of them make accelerated progress across Years 7 and 8.

- The most able pupils are now making accelerated progress, although leaders recognise this is not yet consistently assured.
- Disadvantaged pupils currently at the school, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are making more rapid progress across a range of subjects. Leaders are aware that progress for these pupils needs to accelerate further so that they achieve as well as their peers nationally.
- Most pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making good progress from their individual starting points.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- Leaders are highly ambitious for students in the sixth form. They are reflective about the curriculum they offer, ensuring that it provides stretch and challenge, meeting students' individual needs extremely well. Leaders have rigorous systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form, ensuring that students make excellent progress from their starting points.
- At the end of 2016 and 2017, the school met both the academic and vocational minimum standards. The progress of students in the sixth form is well above the national average for students studying A-level courses. Students studying vocational courses achieve as well as other pupils with the same starting points nationally. This includes students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Leaders and sixth-form staff generate a very positive culture based on effective student support and high expectations. Students value the care and quality of teaching they receive. Students say that staff are prepared 'to go the extra mile' for them.
- Students' behaviour in the sixth form is exemplary. They are punctual, attend well and have excellent personal and social skills. Students have very positive relationships with their teachers and their peers. They engage exceptionally well with their learning.
- Teaching in the sixth form is typically very strong. Teachers' subject knowledge is a major strength of the provision and enables teachers to deepen students' understanding through highly insightful and effective questioning. Leaders' precise tracking identifies quickly any students falling behind. Students receive appropriate support to ensure that they remain on track to achieve their ambitious targets.
- Effective pre-16 careers guidance ensures that students are well informed about the range of options open to them. Those that stay on or join the sixth form from another school embark on suitable study programmes. Careers information and guidance are significant strengths. There are strong links with local businesses, and work experience is provided for all. Rates of retention are improving and students go on to a wide range of destinations such as university, apprenticeships and employment.
- Students are highly positive about their sixth form and would wholeheartedly recommend it to others.

School details

Unique reference number	135630
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10045473

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

Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	998
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	147
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mr R Findlay
Principal	Mrs A O'Donnell
Telephone number	01474 700 700
Website	www.longfieldacademy.org
Email address	info@longfieldacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	10–11 June 2014

Information about this school

- Longfield Academy is part of Leigh Academies Trust. Governance of the school is through Longfield Academy Board and Leigh Academies Trust Board.
- The school is an average-sized mixed secondary school for pupils aged 11 to 19.
- The school shares expertise and accesses training and support across other schools in Leigh Academies Trust.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and/or who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The school has a provision funded by the local authority (the Spectrum Centre) for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. There are currently 37 pupils in this provision.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is similar to the national average.
- A small number of key stage 4 pupils attend alternative provision at North West Kent Alternative Provision Service.
- The school meets the government's floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 43 lessons across a range of subjects and year groups. Eleven of these sessions were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work in lessons and a selection of pupils' books were scrutinised. Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons, around the school and during breaktimes.
- Inspectors held meetings with the chief executive officer and deputy chief executive officer of the trust, the school principal, other senior leaders, groups of middle leaders, teachers, governors and a member of the trust board.
- Inspectors took into account 96 questionnaires received from staff and also met with individuals and groups of staff. Inspectors also met with groups of pupils, as well as with sixth-form students.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents, taking into account 102 responses to the online Ofsted parent questionnaire, Parent View, including 87 free-text responses.
- Inspectors evaluated key documents, including the school's strategic planning documents, minutes of meetings, including governor meetings, attendance and behaviour reports, and records relating to pupils' safety and academic progress.

Inspection team

Susan Willman, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Peter Swan	Ofsted Inspector
Ross Macdonald	Ofsted Inspector

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