

# Inspection of Longsands Academy

Longsands Road, St Neots, Cambridgeshire PE19 1LQ

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Inspection dates: 29–30 October 2019

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Sixth-form provision

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils say that adults in the school want the best for them. Pupils' work is of a good or improving quality. Published exam results reflect the developments made to the quality of education.

Pupils have mixed views on behaviour and how it is managed. They told us that behaviour in lessons is much better than it used to be. We saw plenty of evidence of pupils working hard and behaving well in their classes. However, pupils told us that they get frustrated or confused with how some teachers apply the school's policies. Some parents and carers also expressed frustration over how adults apply the school's behaviour policies. Some pupils are taking longer to adapt to leaders' expectations of how they should behave.

Pupils told us that they like the range of clubs and visits that they can take part in. They said that there is a good selection of sports and leadership opportunities. Pupils learn about important social, religious and cultural topics. Despite this, some pupils do not develop a good-enough understanding of issues that would prepare them for later life.

Pupils are safe in the school. They say that, while there is a little bullying, when they tell an adult, the adult helps to resolve the problem. Pupils said this was not always the case in the recent past.

Students in the sixth form value their teachers' hard work and expertise. Students explained that their teachers give up 'all the extra hours that are needed' to help them with their work. Students achieve well.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Over the past year, leaders have amended the curriculum and how it is delivered. Curriculum leaders and teachers are clear on what knowledge should be taught and the best order in which to teach it. We saw strong examples of this in English, history, languages, music, mathematics and, to a lesser degree, in science. Leaders are improving the curriculum in design and technology.

Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects and how to teach them. They choose resources and activities that interest pupils. Teachers ask useful questions to check that pupils understand what they are learning. Teachers are quick to spot when pupils have not got to grips with a topic. They then help pupils to better understand their work. The good quality of many current pupils' work shows that teachers' work is paying off.

The provision and leadership for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are too uneven. While some teachers and teaching assistants meet these pupils' academic, social and emotional needs well, others do not. This

means that, too often, pupils with SEND do not make good-enough progress.

The principal has acted to improve pupils' behaviour. The most recent changes were introduced in September. Pupils and staff told us behaviour in lessons is much better than it used to be. Learning often takes place without disruption. Relationships between pupils and staff are usually positive. Even so, more work needs to be done to make sure that the new approaches are: amended in the light of leaders' reviews; commonly understood by pupils and parents; and consistently applied by teachers.

The attendance of some of the most disadvantaged pupils is low. Leaders are taking action to bring about improvements. It is too early in this academic year to judge the impact of their actions.

There is a detailed programme to support pupils' personal development. We saw pupils maturely discussing political and social topics. Leaders' systems for checking that pupils develop an equally strong understanding of different social issues, cultures and beliefs need improving. Some pupils' understanding of these areas is not sufficiently well developed. This means that pupils are not as well prepared for life in modern Britain as they should be.

There is a dedicated student support team. Some pupils told us about the excellent care that they have received when they needed help with their social, emotional or mental well-being. Yet, a significant number of pupils are less aware of this support or how to access it.

Students in the sixth form achieve well, because the curriculum is suitably designed and delivered. Students explained that they feel well looked after. They also told us they would welcome more information to prepare them for independent living.

The school became part of Astrea Academy Trust (the trust) in September 2018. The trust has addressed some complex issues. The principal is new to his post. He and the leadership team are getting to grips with what needs to be done. They are acting with integrity and determination to make the necessary changes so that pupils achieve more. Staff are supportive of leaders and the changes that they are making. Leaders are well placed to bring about further improvements. It is too soon to judge the impact of some of their work.

A large number of parents left responses on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. While many are supportive of leaders' work, a significant minority would not recommend the school. Leaders have put in place strategies to better communicate with parents. More needs to be done to inform and reassure parents about the reasons for, timing and impact of the changes that are taking place.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained in safeguarding matters. They are aware of risks that pupils

may face, including those relating to county lines. Adults know the signs that may indicate that a pupil is vulnerable.

School records show that adults refer any concerns to the school's safeguarding leaders promptly. Leaders act quickly, so that pupils get the extra help that they need. Leaders also seek external advice when it is necessary to do so.

The trust, which has responsibility for governance, makes sure that leaders carry out the right checks on adults working at the school.

Leaders make sure that pupils are given information to help them to feel safe and to understand potential risks that they may face.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders have raised expectations of how pupils should behave. Pupils' behaviour has improved considerably. This is leading to a more focused learning environment. Nevertheless, aspects of the behaviour systems are very new. There is inconsistency in how teachers implement leaders' high expectations. Some parents and pupils are confused and unhappy about the rationale for, and impact of, these approaches. Leaders should continue to review what is working well and what needs to be changed and make appropriate amendments. Leaders need to make sure that staff consistently implement leaders' chosen approaches.
- Leaders have put in place a detailed programme for pupils' personal development. Much of this is delivered through the school's learning for life and work (LLW) programme. Some aspects are delivered through subjects such as history and religious education. Leaders are not as clear as they need to be on where pupils' and students' understanding is strong and where it is weaker. Leaders should help pupils develop a more thorough understanding about cultural, social and spiritual issues. Leaders should also make sure that pupils are better informed about the support that is in place to support their emotional and mental well-being.
- Several parents expressed concern about the quality of provision for pupils with SEND. We saw evidence of some pupils with SEND receiving effective support. Many teachers and teaching assistants have a good understanding of the needs of these pupils and provide effective support. Leaders need to do more to ensure that teachers meet pupils' academic, social and emotional needs. Leaders need to develop more thorough systems to check the impact of this work.
- Leaders are taking effective action to improve the school. A minority of parents have made clear their unhappiness about aspects of leaders' work. Leaders have taken steps to make sure that, where appropriate, parents are better informed about changes that are being made. More still needs to be done in this regard.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136992
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10110232
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1826
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	440
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trustees</b>	James Muir
<b>Principal</b>	Hywel Jones
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.astrea-longsands.org">http://www.astrea-longsands.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 May 2018

## Information about this school

- The school joined the Astrea Academy Trust in September 2018.
- The principal took up his post in April 2019.
- The board of trustees is responsible for governance of the school. This is supported by a local transition management board and there are plans for this to be replaced by a local education consultative committee in the current academic year.
- The school makes use of alternative provision for a small number of pupils. The provision used is: Prospect House, based at Ernulf Academy; and Cambridge Regional College (Huntingdon campus).

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with: the principal; other members of the school's senior leadership team; curriculum leaders; teachers; pastoral support staff; the behaviour manager; and administrative staff. An inspector had separate phone conversations with the chief executive officer and the executive director of education of the trust.
- We spoke with many pupils throughout the course of the inspection.
- We considered the following subjects in depth as part of this inspection: design and technology; English; history; languages; mathematics; music; and science. For each subject, we met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, met with teachers, spoke with pupils and looked at pupils' work. We also visited lessons in which other subjects were being taught.
- We took account of views expressed in the large number of responses to the parent, pupil and staff surveys. We also took into account views expressed in one phone conversation with a parent and those in an email received during the course of the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding we: viewed the school's website; reviewed school policies; met with the school's designated safeguarding leader; met with the trust's deputy director of inclusion; spoke with pupils, teachers and support staff; checked school records of safeguarding checks carried out on adults working at the school; sampled records of actions leaders take when a pupil needs extra support; and took account of the high numbers of responses to Ofsted's pupil, parent and staff surveys.

## **Inspection team**

John Lucas, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kathryn Herlock	Ofsted Inspector
Gerard Batty	Ofsted Inspector
Shan Oswald	Ofsted Inspector
Damian Loneragan	Ofsted Inspector

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