

Inspection of Longhill High School

Falmer Road, Rottingdean, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 7FR

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 March 2024

Overall effectiveness

The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Significant challenges in recruiting staff, alongside several changes at senior leadership level, have been particularly unsettling for the school in recent years. Consequently, some pupils do not attend school regularly enough and their variable attitudes to learning have slowed their progress. This has resulted in disappointing levels of attainment in external examinations.

Recent leadership changes are already securing significant improvements. Expectations of pupils and staff are much higher now. The focus on high aspirations, determination and success is ensuring that pupils are more positive about their education. Pupils appreciate the revised behaviour policy, the smart school uniform and being welcomed by staff at the start of the day. Parents say that communication is better, and they value the formation of the parents' forum.

Pupils say behaviour is improving and behaviour seen was mostly calm and positive. Older pupils have high aspirations for their futures. These are encouraged by positive, respectful relationships and a sharp focus on the next stage of their education, employment or training. Pupils are safe and say they are happy. Incidents of bullying have reduced, and pupils confirm that there are trusted adults to turn to if they have any concerns.

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

Pupils are beginning to benefit from an ambitious curriculum that has been designed well in most subjects. In most subjects, the curriculum is carefully planned, sequenced and developed to ensure content is broad and balanced. However, the quality of teaching of the curriculum varies within and across subjects. As a result, pupils' attainment in public examinations remains significantly below national averages.

Disadvantaged pupils are known and supported effectively. They are prioritised for additional help and support. Work is mostly tailored to their individual abilities and aptitudes. However, these adaptations are not yet consistent across the whole curriculum. As a result, gaps still exist between the achievement of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils.

Teacher's subject knowledge is mostly secure. Where learning is most successful, leaders have supported staff effectively to develop their subject knowledge and pedagogy. However, for some subjects, this work is in its relative infancy.

The school has prioritised reading. This is actively encouraged across the curriculum, with extra help in place for pupils in Years 7 and 8 who need it. Strategies include focused reading during mentor time and regular library visits. Careers support ensures that aspirations are highlighted, and pupils are well prepared. The school enjoys strong links with local post-16 providers.

Older pupils are ambitious for their future. They value the opportunities that they are given. The school provides an impressively wide range of extra-curricular activities, including arts and sports. Student leadership responsibilities include a student council and mental health champions.

Leaders have redesigned the personal development programme to raise the profile of personal, social and health education (PSHE) and better support pupils' welfare and well-being. Provision is occasionally inconsistent where teachers are not confident in their delivery. This means that some pupils are less well informed about topics that prepare them for life in modern Britain.

Leaders support staff well. They are mindful of their workload. Staff feel motivated and valued. They are grateful for the encouragement that they receive and feel that it is helping them to improve. Staff have a strong grasp of safeguarding and feel well trained and supported in this area.

Governors are taking a more responsive role in supporting the school and challenging underperformance. They are organised, knowledgeable and enthusiastic. Their links with parents and the community are improving.

Senior leaders have raised expectations across the school. There is an accurate understanding of the school's priorities for improvement, which are being pursued with rigour and determination. The focus on behaviour and attendance is having a positive impact which is evident across the school. Senior leaders have worked hard to reduce suspensions through helping staff to develop their expertise in supporting pupils to make positive choices and improve their behaviour.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Across the curriculum, variability in the quality of teaching prevents pupils from learning as well as they should. As a result, pupils' achievement remains significantly below national averages. The school should ensure that existing best practice is shared across all subjects, supported by strong subject leadership and ongoing professional development.
- Despite recent improvements, behaviour is not always consistently good, and attendance is not high enough. As a result, pupils do not benefit sufficiently from the well-planned curriculum. The school should ensure that their current focused work on behaviour results in low-level disruption being eliminated and pupils, particularly the disadvantaged, coming to school more often.
- The implementation of the personal development programme is uneven across the school. As a result, pupils are not sufficiently engaged in PSHE and mentor

time, or consistently prepared for life in modern Britain. Leaders should ensure that the delivery of the revised programme is consistently implemented across the school through PSHE, mentor time and assemblies, as well as across subjects.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	114581
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10296197
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	875
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chairs of governing body	Linda Newman and Sean Burke
Headteacher	Rachelle Otulakowski
Website	www.longhill.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 and 19 September 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Longhill High School is a below-average-sized 11 to 16 mixed community school. The school is maintained by the Brighton and Hove local authority.
- Twenty pupils attend alternative provision at six registered education providers and two unregistered providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in English, mathematics, geography, modern foreign languages and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders and visited a sample of lessons. They spoke with teachers, talked to pupils and looked at samples of their work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record and took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils. They considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding which puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed the policies provided on the school website. They looked at attendance records, behaviour logs, curriculum documentation and destination statistics. Inspectors held meetings with leaders, teachers and pupils. They spoke to leaders at a sample of the alternative placement schools. The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority and members of the governing board, including the chairs of governors.
- Inspectors looked at the responses to the Ofsted Parent View online questionnaire and additional written comments received from parents and carers. They considered the survey returns completed by staff and pupils.

Inspection team

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