Inspection of Longspee Academy

Learoyd Road, Canford Heath, Poole, Dorset BH17 8PJ

Inspection dates:	21 and 22 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Outstanding**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The principals of this school are Gavin O'Connell and Leigh Bailey-Pearce. This school is part of the Ambitions Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Fay MacRitchie, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alison Beane OBE.

What is it like to attend this school?

Longspee Academy provides a calm and nurturing environment for pupils to learn in. Many pupils arrive from failed placements elsewhere. Pupils receive the care and support they need to help them overcome the challenges they face and to learn. As a result, pupils gain confidence and self-esteem, which helps them to progress well through the curriculum.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils know what is expected of them. When pupils are anxious, staff take effective and supportive action to enable pupils to re-engage with their learning. However, some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This means that they miss crucial learning and have gaps in their knowledge.

Pupils are confident they have a voice. High-quality pastoral support and positive relationships with adults enable pupils to feel valued. Pupils have the opportunity to express their views on a range of local and national issues. They understand healthy lifestyles and keeping safe.

Pupils relish the extra responsibilities the school offers, such as being members of the school council. In addition, pupils support the community through, for example, the local food bank and acting as park rangers. These responsibilities develop pupils' social and leadership skills well.

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

Many older pupils have experienced long periods of time out of school prior to starting at Longspee. This means they arrive with significant gaps in their knowledge. The school focuses on supporting each pupil. It wants them to become confident learners and responsible citizens. The school's vision of 'happy, safe, progress' shines through. Staff strive for every pupil to experience success to enable them to lead fulfilling lives.

The school has an ambitious curriculum. Pupils can study a wide range of subjects. Learning outside the classroom is a firm favourite, for example going shopping and visiting cafes. This helps pupils to practise their financial skills. The school wants pupils to gain the knowledge they need for their next steps. The school is determined that every pupil will leave the school with GCSE success. Pupils have access to therapeutic provision such as equine and music therapy. However, this provision is hindered by some pupils' high absence rates. This impacts on their learning. As a result, there are gaps in their knowledge. The school is working with parents and other agencies to improve pupils' attendance. However, it is not showing the impact it requires.

The school sees reading as the gateway to pupils' success. Staff have the aspiration that all pupils will become, at the very least, functional readers. Pupils understand the importance of learning to read to increase their independence as they grow

older. Pupils in the early stages of reading benefit from highly effective phonics teaching. Reading books match the sounds that pupils know. Staff are skilled in teaching reading. This means they are able to identify any pupils falling behind and provide the support they need to keep up. Pupils regularly get the opportunity either to read or listen to stories. This helps pupils to increase their reading fluency and to develop a love of books.

Pupils' wider personal development is fundamental to the school's work. A well-designed personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum helps pupils to be kind, thoughtful young people. They learn to respect and celebrate the diversity of the world in which they live. The school works closely with carefully chosen charities. As a result, pupils develop a sense of responsibility and empathy. Visits, such as to the Lighthouse Theatre, Arts University Bournemouth and Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, enhance pupils' learning.

The school puts helpful careers guidance and support in place. They do not put a ceiling on pupils' aspirations. Work experience is carefully planned, and includes the military, engineering and working with children. The school is determined that any work experience is meaningful and supports pupils' talents and interests.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils do not attend school often enough. As a result, they do not build their knowledge well over time and have gaps in their learning. The trust needs to ensure that the attendance strategy and work with parents are effective in ensuring that pupils attend regularly so they learn more successfully over time.
- There remains a legacy where older pupils have gaps in their knowledge. This means they are not able to access more complex learning to support future aspirations. The trust needs to ensure that learning is adapted to close any remaining gaps securely.

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	140067
Local authority	Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole
Inspection number	10322272
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	107
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alison Beane OBE
CEO of trust	Fay MacRitchie
Principals	Gavin O'Connell Leigh Bailey-Pearce
Website	www.longspeeacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 February 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Longspee Academy has expanded since the time of the last inspection and now has key stage 4 pupils. The principal of the secondary site started in post September 2023.
- Longspee Academy is arranged over three separate sites within Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole local authority.
- The academy provides an education for pupils with autism and, social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- There have been significant changes within the trust with the appointment of a new chief executive officer who started in February 2024.

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 met with the headteacher, the assistant headteachers and staff.
- The lead inspector met the chief executive officer of the trust.
- The lead inspector spoke with the chair of trust and the chair of the academy advisory committee.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and PSHE. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector sampled pupils' work in science and English.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils across the school read to an adult. The lead inspector visited DEAR sessions in Years 8 and 9.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered key documentation, including rapid achievement plans and the school's self-evaluation.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. The inspectors met with school leaders to discuss and scrutinise how they respond to behaviour incidents and pupils' attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the staff survey, Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including free-text replies. Inspectors spoke with parents at the start and the end of the day.

Inspection team

Jen Southall, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Mike Thomas	Ofsted Inspector

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