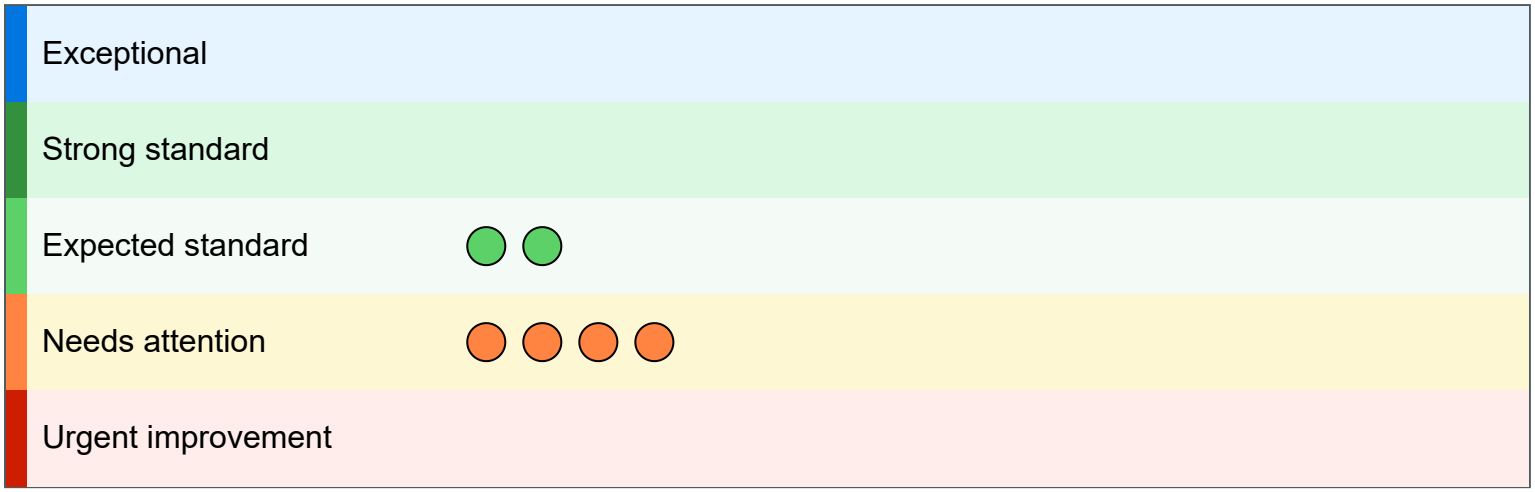
Longhill High School

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

Unique reference number (URN): 114581

Inspection report: 9 June 2026



Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders work hard to break down barriers to learning. This starts with careful identification of pupils' needs when they start. The school uses this information well. Leaders develop detailed provision plans that communicate pupils' needs accurately to staff. This helps staff to identify potential barriers to success that pupils may face. As a result, staff typically provide the additional support that pupils need. Pupils generally build on their prior knowledge, and leaders have clear oversight of pupils' overall progress. This monitoring has become increasingly precise. Leaders use this information effectively to amend and adapt the approaches taken. Leaders have designed an effective range of support to break down barriers to learning. For example, interventions are delivered consistently well by skilled staff.

The school has a well-designed pupil premium strategy. Leaders have accurately identified the key challenges pupils face. Leaders analyse the impact of this work carefully. This helps them to shape the strategy to meet need. The school's understanding of the barriers that pupils known to social care face is similarly precise. This helps them to provide a wide range of support. These pupils thrive as a result of this work. The school uses alternative provision consistently well. Leaders track pupils' engagement and attendance carefully. This work is generally effective, helping pupils to re-engage with learning over time.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

The school's curriculum expands far beyond the classroom. This ensures that all pupils have opportunities to develop a broad range of skills and knowledge. Leaders provide a carefully structured curriculum for the teaching of personal, social and health education (PSHE). They have clearly identified the important skills and knowledge they want pupils to learn. Pupils recall their learning in PSHE accurately. For example, pupils know how to stay safe online and in the wider community. This understanding becomes increasingly sophisticated over time.

Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They have appropriate opportunities to share their views and to consider opinions that may differ to their own. Leaders recognise that this is an essential skill for their pupils. Pupils have a deep understanding of important values such as tolerance. They have mature attitudes to diversity. Pupils are respectful of each other's differences. The school enhances this work through well-planned activities such as diversity days.

Pupils have ample opportunities to develop skills and talents. This includes a wide range of clubs. Leaders have made conscious decisions to help all pupils to benefit from these experiences, for example offering lunchtime clubs. As a result, participation rates are rising. Leaders track this carefully. The school also offers a range of trips that deepen pupils' learning. Leaders ensure there are no financial barriers to activities. All pupils have opportunities to represent the school in a range of sports, or as members of the active school council. Pupils are enthusiastic about these roles.

The school has a well-designed careers education programme. Pupils develop a clear understanding of the world of work. Leaders ensure that pupils have appropriate interactions with a range of employers and providers. The school enhances this with a well-designed work experience programme. Pupils have detailed understanding of potential next steps.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention

Pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Their progress through the curriculum is inconsistent. Some pupils, particularly those with extended periods of absence, have gaps in their learning. They do not narrow these gaps quickly enough. Pupils' performance in tests is below national averages. As a result, pupils do not typically have the knowledge they need for their next steps.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities generally make appropriate progress against their personalised targets. This is less consistent for disadvantaged pupils. They do not achieve well in comparison to similar pupils nationally.

Pupils become increasingly fluent and confident readers. One pupil excitedly shared the fact that they had ‘finished a whole book for the first time'. This is typical of pupils' increasing enjoyment of the books they read. However, the accuracy of pupils' writing does not improve as well as it should.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention

Pupils do not attend well enough. While this has improved recently, attendance remains significantly below national averages. This means that too many pupils miss too much vital learning. Leaders' work to improve attendance is becoming more effective over time. It begins with detailed analysis of absence patterns. Leaders identify those pupils who need additional help to attend well. However, leaders' understanding of the impact of this work lacks detail. This means that the selected actions do not always have the required impact.

Leaders have established a culture of positive behaviour. As a result, pupils behave well. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They work hard to complete the tasks that teachers set. This helps to create a focused and purposeful atmosphere. Teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Staff strive to forge meaningful relationships with pupils. These are evident in the positive interactions that staff and pupils share. This positive behaviour creates the school's calm and orderly environment. Bullying is rare and pupils feel that staff manage incidents swiftly. This helps pupils to feel well cared for.

Leaders keep close oversight of behaviour. This helps them to address issues swiftly. Leaders select effective strategies for pupils who need additional help to behave well. These are typically successful. Leaders track the impact of this work carefully.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention

Staff do not implement the curriculum consistently well. Their ongoing checks on pupils' learning during lessons are not precise enough. Teachers do not always identify inaccuracies in pupils' writing or spelling swiftly. They do not consistently adapt approaches and activities during lessons to meet pupils' different needs. This means that pupils cannot always learn crucial knowledge as well as they should.

Leaders know that there is further work needed to improve teaching. They have a detailed understanding of the inconsistencies that exist and the individual staff who may require additional help. This helps them to provide personalised support for these staff. Leaders also have clear plans to improve the curriculum. These strategies are appropriate but relatively new.

The school has an increasingly ambitious and well-designed curriculum. This builds logically on pupils' prior learning over time. Leaders have planned appropriate support for pupils who require additional help to become fluent readers. However, support is less effective for pupils with weaknesses in transcription or mathematics. Teachers typically have secure subject knowledge. They use this to provide clear explanations. Teachers generally select tasks that engage pupils well, helping them to build the skills and knowledge they need.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention

Leaders' efforts to address historic weaknesses have had mixed success. Their actions have had a positive impact in areas such as inclusion. However, while leaders have identified the right priorities, they have not consistently secured the necessary improvements in attendance, the curriculum and teaching. Leaders communicate the key priorities effectively to staff. However, some leaders lack precise understanding of the impact of their work. This means they cannot always amend or adapt approaches as swiftly as they need. Leaders have worked hard to improve their relationships with parents and carers. The vast majority of parents are now very positive about the school.

Governors undertake their work effectively. They have appropriate oversight of the school’s work. Governors enhance this understanding through well-designed monitoring processes. This helps governors to offer high levels of challenge and support to leaders. Governors undertake their statutory duties diligently. They have detailed understanding of the school's use of additional funding. This helps them to prioritise the school's work for disadvantaged pupils.

The school offers a broad programme of professional learning for staff. They have prioritised key areas of the school’s work and use this to plan a range of training. This helps staff to become increasingly confident in their work. Staff enjoy working at the school and feel that leaders value them.

Leaders work well with staff. They act as strong role models, and staff respond positively to this. There is a strong team ethos. This includes shared high ambition for all pupils. Staff are dedicated and work hard in the best interests of pupils.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils are proud to attend Longhill. They build warm relationships with staff. This helps them to develop an increasingly secure sense of belonging. Pupils enjoy school and are positive about the changes that leaders have made. They feel that expectations have risen significantly. Teachers apply these expectations through consistent use of the school's behaviour approach. This helps pupils to behave well. Pupils are polite and courteous. They are considerate of others, and this creates a positive environment throughout the school. Pupils have mature attitudes to difference and diversity. They show high levels of respect to all. Pupils have trusted adults in school and know that staff will deal with any concerns they have. This helps them to feel happy and safe.

Pupils enjoy learning. They listen carefully to teachers and work hard at their studies. However, the curriculum is not implemented consistently well. As a result, pupils do not learn some of the skills and knowledge they need. This means that, overall, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in national tests. Many pupils also do not attend well enough. This has improved slightly but too many pupils miss significant amounts of the crucial content they need. Low attendance means that a number of pupils have gaps in learning they do not fill effectively.

Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The school helps them to develop important qualities such as resilience. Pupils become increasingly confident. This is evident in the respectful but assured way in which they interact with adults. Pupils are tolerant of others and consider views that differ to their own in an appropriate manner. They contribute positively to the school community through the school's dynamic pupil council. For example, pupils worked with catering staff to make changes to the school menu. Pupils are rightly proud of this work.

Next steps

- All leaders should check the impact of their actions carefully and adjust their strategies in response for maximum success.
- Leaders should ensure that staff use assessment effectively in lessons to identify gaps in pupils' understanding or skills and adapt teaching to address these gaps and help pupils to achieve as well as they should.
- Leaders must sustain and build on recent work to improve attendance so that pupils attend as well as they should over time.
- Leaders should ensure that all staff receive the support they need to be confident in applying the school's expectations around teaching consistently well.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Sean Burke.

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

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspectors are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

The inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders during the inspection. The lead inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair. They also spoke with a representative of the local authority. The inspection team also spoke to groups of staff and pupils during the inspection.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education, qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of 5 alternative provisions, none of which are unregistered.

Headteacher: Rachelle Otulakowski

Lead inspector:
Gavin Thomas, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Stephen Long, Ofsted Inspector
Hanna Miller, Ofsted Inspector
Tania Harding, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from different sources. More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 9 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

723
Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,200
Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

44.26%
Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

3.46%
Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

25.03%
Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English indices of deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

SpLD - Specific Learning Difficulty

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	22.2%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	27.2%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	28.0%	45.3%	Below

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	32.9	46.1	Below
2023/24 (final)	36.1	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	35.8	46.3	Below

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.70	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.62	-0.03	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	10.8%	25.8%	Below
2023/24 (final)	17.0%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	10.6%	25.2%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	25.5	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	29.1	34.6	Below
2022/23 (final)	22.5	35.0	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-1.00	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-1.65	-0.57	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	10.8%	53.1%	-42.4 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	17.0%	53.1%	-36.2 pp
2022/23 (final)	10.6%	52.4%	-41.8 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	25.5	50.4	-24.9
2023/24 (final)	29.1	50.0	-20.9
2022/23 (final)	22.5	50.3	-27.8

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-1.00	0.16	-1.17
2022/23 (final)	-1.65	0.17	-1.81

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (revised)	88%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	94%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	95%	94%	Average

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	16.8%	8.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	15.4%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	13.4%	9.0%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	48.0%	23.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	49.4%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	42.4%	26.5%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional 🔵

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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