



Longridge High School A Maths and Computing College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119749
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280651
Inspection dates 21 June 2006 to 22 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Patrick Geraghty

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Preston Road
School category	Community		Longridge
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Preston, Lancashire
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01772 782316
Number on roll	765	Fax number	01772 786486
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Jeff Warburton
Date of previous inspection	1 September 1999	Headteacher	Mr Alan Lewis

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 21 June 2006 - 22 June 2006	Inspection number 280651
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Longridge High School recruits from a wide geographical area and range of socio-economic backgrounds. Numbers have increased significantly in recent years and the school is now over subscribed. About 30% of the school's population is drawn from wards classified as within the 25% most deprived areas in England and Wales. The majority of the students enter the school in Year 7 having achieved standards that are broadly in line with the national average. The school was granted specialist school status in mathematics and computing in September 2004.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Longridge High School is a good school which provides a secure, safe environment in which students feel valued and enjoy their education. Achievement and standards are good and the progress students make is significantly better than pupils in similar schools. However, students need to make better progress in English. Students are developing good practice in healthy living, often through the implementation of their own initiatives in partnership with the school. They are also developing an appreciation of personal well-being and their responsibilities to the school, their fellows and the larger community. Behaviour is good and, in the words of one Year 7 pupil, there is 'zero tolerance' of bullying. Good teaching enables students to succeed and reach the standards expected of them.

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of all students. Excellent and developing initiatives are underway to promote work-related courses. Students appreciate the range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sports. The quality of the care and support students receive is outstanding. Collaboration and engagement with the local community and with local schools and colleges is very good and benefits students. The school has made good use of its specialist school status and is developing very high quality provision in science and mathematics. Resourcing for computers has increased significantly, although the use of information and communication technology (ICT) has yet to be fully embedded across the curriculum. The leadership of the headteacher and senior managers is excellent. The school's self-evaluation shows that senior managers have a clear understanding of both the school's strengths and the areas where improvement is needed. However, the quality of leadership at middle management and subject level is inconsistent. Because of measured and sustainable improvements over the last five years, inspectors judged that the school has the capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement and standards in English.
- Improve consistency across the school at middle management and subject leader level so that all reflect the standards of the best.
- Embed the use of ICT across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The majority of the students enter the school in Year 7 having achieved standards that are broadly in line with the national average. From Years 7 to 9 students make good progress in science and mathematics but do significantly less well in English. External examinations show that students have made good progress by the end of Year 9 and standards are above the national average. Standards in mathematics and science have been significantly better than the national average over a period of five years.

By the end of Year 11 students make good progress. Progress between Years 7 to 11 is significantly ahead of similar schools. Between Years 9 to 11 boys in general make strong progress. In 2005, the proportion of students obtaining five or more GCSE passes at grade C or above was significantly above the national average. Students did particularly well in business studies, science, drama, German, history, ICT and mathematics. The school recognises that progress in English is below average and has taken action to bring about improvements. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and make satisfactory progress. The small number of students from minority ethnic groups make progress in line with national expectations at both key stages.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development is good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students behave well and enjoy school. The newly instituted 'behaviour for learning' initiative tackles unacceptable behaviour immediately. While the number of exclusions has risen, every effort is made to reintegrate students by encouraging them to face and discuss the reasons behind their conduct and its consequences. The tutorial programme includes guidance on substance abuse, smoking, nutrition and sexual health. Most students adopt healthy lifestyles: they enjoy playing sport and are encouraged to join school teams. This enthusiasm for school is mirrored in excellent attendance with very low rates of unauthorised absence. Merit schemes reward all kinds of achievement and contribute to a growing culture of success and ambition. Students are actively involved in the way the school is run and this participation makes a significant contribution to their social development, self-confidence and motivation. The school council and school parliament, for example, have been actively involved in the anti-bullying policy. There are extensive opportunities to develop economic well-being through careers awareness programmes from Year 7 to a long and valued tradition of success in Young Enterprise.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Since the last inspection teaching styles have become more varied and students are more involved in their own learning. In the better lessons students are given opportunities to work independently, in pairs and groups, and to use initiative in presentation. In science students appreciate being actively involved in learning and respond enthusiastically to challenges. In the words of one pupil, 'science is fun and challenging; I always feel I can't wait until the next lesson'. There is exemplary use of ICT in some areas; however, this practice is not sufficiently embedded across the curriculum. Some lessons are too teacher-centred and student participation and engagement is more limited. Assessment is good. Marking is frequent and consistent, with good advice on how students can improve their performance.

Effort and achievement are acknowledged and rewarded. Half-termly progress checks are sent to parents, as well as a detailed annual report. Progress sheets in each subject allow students to track their own progress. The staff development programme actively encourages the sharing of good practice in teaching and learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and effectively meets statutory requirements for all groups of students. An extensive range of extra-curricular activities enables students to pursue their interests in sport, music, art, languages, drama, technology, business and ICT. Levels of participation are very high and students voiced their enthusiasm for this provision and the opportunities it provides for them. The school's achievement of specialist school status in mathematics and computing has had a very positive impact on work across all subject areas, within extra-curricular activities and in developing links with the wider community. Teachers are keen to challenge students through new initiatives. For example, data from the school's new 15kw wind turbine is to be used to enhance lessons in science, mathematics, ICT and geography.

Careers education is very good, as is transition to college with over 80% of students progressing to further education. Facilities in ICT have improved greatly since the last inspection. There is a wide range of collaborative and partnership arrangements which enhance the work-related curriculum, work experience programmes and community links.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides excellent care and support for students. The youngest students speak highly of the arrangements which help them settle to the new expectations and demands of secondary school. Child protection requirements and procedures are clear and understood by the majority of staff, and strong links with outside agencies ensure that students at risk receive specialist support. Students feel their views are listened to and respected. Health and safety procedures are properly underpinned by risk assessments, enabling students to undertake a wide range of activities both on and off the school's premises.

The systems for monitoring all students' academic and personal development are very effective in identifying potentially vulnerable or underachieving students or those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are excellent opportunities for the more able students to aim higher; for example, with 'maths challenges' and involvement in musical and sporting activities. Careers education and guidance are excellent, helping students to make well informed decisions about their futures. Reports to parents are exemplary and are typical of the school's efforts to involve them in all matters relating to their children's progress and welfare.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good: standards are high and the majority of students make good progress. The headteacher has the outstanding skill of creating particularly effective teams that focus consistently on improving the school's overall performance. These teams always include representatives from the governing body which contributes to making governance outstanding. The school's self-evaluation is both perceptive and accurate in identifying strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher, senior staff and governors set a vision for improvement which they achieve through effective planning, implementation and management. Recent recruitment of staff has strengthened leadership and management and particularly improved the school's awareness and response to different modes of learning. The leadership of several departments is very effective. However the quality of leadership at middle management and subject leader level across the school is uneven.

The school has taken full advantage of opportunities offered through its specialist school status. The opportunities offered for adult education focused on the use of ICT has cemented strong links with the community. Facilities have been greatly enhanced by careful refurbishment, and the improved learning environment has been a great boost to the morale of teachers and students alike. The school gives good value for money. It is admirably set to improve further because the excellent efforts of the senior leaders have resulted in significant improvement year on year.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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To the students of:

Longridge High School A Maths and Computing College

Preston Road

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PR3 3AR

27 June 2006

Dear students

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team recently. We thoroughly enjoyed our two days at your school. We particularly enjoyed talking to so many of you about your work, interests and how much you enjoy and give to the school. We found that your school is a good school with some outstanding features.

What we liked most about your school:

your very good behaviour and respect for each other and all school staff

the good progress you make in your subjects

the positive attitude you have to your work and how you involve yourselves across a wide range of challenges and initiatives

that the school is well led; the headteacher, staff and governors are working hard because they want you to do the very best you can

that the majority of teaching is good

that the teachers and support staff provide outstanding care and guidance

that you are well prepared for work or college after you leave school.

Your school needs to:

improve your progress in English

improve leadership of all subject areas to those of the best in your school

spread the use of ICT in lessons and learning across more subjects.

We are sure that you will keep up your good behaviour and enthusiasm for learning and will make even better progress.

On behalf of the inspection team, I wish you well for your future education.

Yours sincerely

Patrick Geraghty

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools