

Longford Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102534
Local Authority	Hounslow
Inspection number	323653
Inspection dates	29–30 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Angela Corbett HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1204
Sixth form	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mark Bulpett
Headteacher	Mrs Avril Dalglish
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2006
School address	Tachbrook Road Feltham TW14 9PE
Telephone number	020 8890 0245
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Age group	11–18
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Longford Community School is larger than average in size and is situated close to Heathrow Airport. Most students live locally, which includes areas of economic and social disadvantage. The majority of students are of White British origin, but an increasing proportion, now almost one third, come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. Around a quarter of students are entitled to free school meals; this is higher than average. A similarly above-average proportion speak English as an additional language with a small minority in the early stages of learning English. More than twice the national average have identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The most significant groups are moderate learning and specific learning (dyslexia) difficulties. The school attained specialist status for business and enterprise in 2005 and has achieved a number of awards including Healthy School and Investors in People.

There is an independently managed pre-school playgroup located on the school site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Longford is a good school. The school's motto - 'Longford is for learning' - applies equally to students and staff. It provides exceptional care, guidance and support for its students, linked to its very inclusive and encouraging ethos. As a result, students make good progress and gain qualifications and skills that prepare them exceptionally well for the world of work or further education, regardless of their ability or interests. Students develop into confident, articulate and mature young people. They speak very positively about the school and value both the care and education they receive.

Students enter the school with below-average attainment and some low levels of literacy. Standards are steadily improving and in 2008 the percentage achieving five or more GCSE grades A* to C rose to the national average. In some subjects students' attainment is well above average, for example in business and communication, art and English literature. Well-embedded and robust systems for target-setting, tracking and monitoring students' progress enable teachers and leaders to identify underachievement and provide effective support. However, while there is a good understanding of individual attainment and progress, ongoing review for different groups of students is not always sufficiently well timed to fully inform actions for further improvement.

Teaching is good because it is focused on students' learning through a variety of engaging tasks that are well tailored to the needs of groups and individuals. A key feature of teaching is the consistency of practice in assessing what students have learnt each lesson. Students say this helps teachers to understand the next steps of their learning needs as well as providing them with excellent guidance on how to improve. The focus for raising students' literacy is through specialist provision. However, while this is effective, its improvement through subject teaching is underdeveloped. The school has very successfully incorporated the business and enterprise ethos into the life of the school; this is particularly apparent in the outstanding curriculum.

Students' personal development and well-being are good. Most students enjoy school and engage well in lessons. The school has worked hard to reduce the number of students who are persistently absent to below the national level. Although attendance overall has risen to the national average, it remains a priority for further improvement. Students have an excellent understanding of how to be healthy and contribute well to school life.

A very small minority of parents responded to the parental questionnaire. Just under half of these raised concerns, mainly about bullying and poor behaviour. Behaviour observed during the inspection was good, both in lessons and around school. Students said they feel safe, that they felt confident to raise concerns with staff and that the few incidents of bullying were effectively dealt with.

There is a very strong sense of community and harmony within the school. The school works hard to place itself at the heart of the local community, providing a range of services, access to facilities and support for local schools and charities. Much of this is linked to the school's business and enterprise specialism and contributes positively to the good promotion of community cohesion.

The headteacher has established a culture that challenges senior and middle leaders to be accountable for student progress in their areas. Senior leaders know the school well. They work flexibly, taking appropriate action to address areas of concern, and the capacity to improve is

good. Although development plans are well directed towards raising student achievement, they are not always linked to quantifiable success criteria. As a result, actions for further improvement are not always judged against their measured impact.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form has improved considerably since the last inspection. As a result, numbers have risen and students of all abilities and backgrounds are welcomed. Around one fifth of students are new to the school; many are learning English as an additional language. Students enjoy life in the sixth form, their attendance is above average and most complete their courses.

Overall, attainment on entry is below average. Standards are improving and are in line or just below national averages. Students make good progress, especially those who take the recently introduced vocational courses. The curriculum is now outstanding. It is remarkably flexible, offering a broad range of academic and vocational subjects at different levels, which are extremely well timetabled to meet the needs of all students.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. A striking feature of most successful lessons is the quality of relationships. Students feel teachers are supportive, know them well and work very hard to provide for their needs. Very effective procedures are in place for target-setting. Robust assessment systems ensure that academic progress is regularly reviewed and guidance on how to improve is outstanding. Students' personal development is good. The tutor system, personal, social and health education and the responsibilities taken by students prepare them very well for higher education and the workplace. The numbers of students going to university has significantly increased.

Leadership and management are good. There is clear vision and commitment to continuous improvement, although overall review of actions is underdeveloped; as a result, decisions for further improvement are not always based on the complete picture.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the progress made by students by building on recent improvements in attendance.
- In order to raise standards further, develop students' literacy skills through subject teaching across the curriculum.
- Develop approaches to improvement planning, using clear success criteria, so that data is more effectively used to inform future actions.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

At the end of Year 9 in 2008 school data indicates that students made good progress and achieved standards close to the national average in English and mathematics. However, in science progress remained slow, and well below the national average achieved at Level 5, although more students achieved at Level 6. Current school data indicates that students are making good progress in science as well as English and mathematics, and are on track to exceed their challenging targets.

Progress accelerates at Key Stage 4, and most students made good or better progress in 2008. As a result of school actions, the percentage achieving five or more GCSE grades A* to C when English and mathematics are included also rose, although it remained below national expectations. Almost all specialist targets were met or exceeded. There is some variation in

performance between subjects that the school is successfully working to address. In some subjects attainment was above the national level, including art, English literature and business and communication. Tracking and performance data for the current Year 11, whose attainment on entry was exceptionally low, indicate that they too are making good progress. They should meet or exceed their challenging targets and continue the upward trend of achievement.

Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those learning English as an additional language, make similar progress to their peers because of the effective and skilful support they receive. Students from minority ethnic communities also make good progress in their learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent. Students are friendly, cheerful and welcoming. They enjoy the variety of teaching styles and the good relationships they have with adults in the school and with each other. They are supportive of the school and many, especially the younger ones, take advantage of the large variety of extra-curricular activities. They undertake responsibilities in these areas and through work experience, involvement in leadership schemes and charities develop self-awareness and maturity. Attendance is improving as a result of the school's actions and students have a growing understanding of the link between their achievement and attendance at school.

Students feel that issues they raise through the active house councils are listened to and acted on. For example, they have contributed to initiatives aimed at securing a healthier school. They know what is expected of them and why this helps to cement a successful and harmonious community. Students help each other in class, and through mentor and buddy schemes. They help others through the sports leaders' scheme by working in junior schools, on special days for senior citizens and through charity fund-raising efforts. They are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their lives as a result of the high focus on work-related learning and the development of skills such as teamwork and independence.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is improving, and while some teaching is outstanding, inconsistencies remain. Flexible approaches to teaching, for example through team teaching to larger groups, helps secure students' good progress and models good practice. Teachers build good relationships with students, make good use of attainment data and understand individual needs. As a result, lessons are planned well, have pace and use an effective variety of activities to ensure students' active involvement in learning. Students collaborate well in paired and group work and participate well in the frequent opportunities for discussion, often giving thoughtful contributions. However, the teaching of literacy within classroom lessons is underdeveloped. Assessment for learning sheets are consistently used in all lessons. These are linked to the 'learning walls' that are developing in all subject areas. Students are increasingly taking responsibility for their learning because they routinely consider what they have learned, how they are progressing towards their targets and what they need to learn next. Students' work is regularly assessed and informative comments help them understand how to improve. The good use of information and communication technology (ICT) by both teachers and students

has been promoted as part of the school's specialist status. Students commented positively about the recent introduction of the virtual learning environment and how this is helping them to complete homework tasks.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The outstanding curriculum is varied, and particularly enhanced by the school's business and enterprise specialism. Frequently reviewed and refined, it consistently meets all students' needs and interests. In Year 7 students needing additional support are identified early and provided with very effective support. For example, the 'themes' curriculum improves literacy as well as behavioural aspects of learning. At Key Stage 4 different pathways provide students with a wide range of academic and vocational choices. These include languages, health and social care, young apprenticeships, and, for the more-able, GCSE statistics. The Prince's Trust 'XL' club helps to re-engage those who are less keen to learn. Fortnightly 'Flexible Fridays' provide unique opportunities that enhance subject learning or develop workplace skills through cross-curricular activities. For instance, during an enterprise day students worked collaboratively to make soap in science, packaging in technology and advertising leaflets in ICT. Provision for enterprise and citizenship learning and those for whom English is an additional language is excellent. From Year 9 students follow accredited courses linked to the specialist subjects of business and ICT. Personal and academic development is further enhanced through a very good range of overseas links, trips, visits and visitors. For example, the 'Lets be Blunt' sessions, lead by a visiting teacher, enabled the 'XL' students to consider and discuss knife crime. Outside of lessons, they enjoy a wide variety of activities that includes sport, music, study support and debating competitions.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pastoral care is outstanding. Students value the work of both the pastoral and welfare teams. All staff take a consistent approach in how they monitor and respond to both good and unsatisfactory behaviour. Risk assessment and safeguarding procedures are secure. The school provides exceptionally well for vulnerable students, including those in the early stages of acquiring English. Their needs are carefully tracked and staff react rapidly when problems arise, putting in place effective support and encouragement. That short-term exclusion from school is rare, reflects the high level of impact. Academic guidance is outstanding. The school has developed very robust processes for tracking students' progress. Students are consistently given information about their progress in all subjects and what they need to do to achieve their challenging targets. Information is used well by leaders and teachers to tackle underachievement through a range of well-targeted interventions. Similarly, students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well cared for and supported. Students receive excellent advice and guidance about further education and careers so they have realistic yet challenging ambitions. Consequently, almost all proceed into the sixth form, employment or further education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides strong leadership and is very well supported by senior leaders. The team shares a common sense of purpose in developing the school further and improving the

life chances for all students. This drive is also shared by the highly committed staff. The quality of teaching and learning is improving through the high priority placed on rigorous and accurate monitoring of performance in the classroom. The school has good systems in place to support both teachers new to the profession and those wishing to develop as leaders. As a result, there are emerging strengths among middle leaders who are increasingly taking responsibility for developing and reviewing work within their areas and at whole-school level. This demonstrates their good capacity for further improvement. Development plans are well linked to the school's high aspirations for its students and specialist status. However, actions do not always have measurable targets, particularly in relation to the progress of groups of students, to fully inform decisions for further improvement. Governors are supportive, know the school well and increasingly hold leaders to account, particularly in relation to student achievement. Nevertheless, there is room for a more rigorous approach to reviewing policies. Excellent partnerships with other organisations and agencies very effectively support students' personal development and well-being and broaden their educational experiences.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2	

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

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

14 May 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Longford Community School, Feltham, TW14 9PE

On behalf of your inspection team, I would like to let you know that we enjoyed the time we spent with you on our recent visit. We would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and for sharing your views with us in meetings, lessons and around the school. Longford is providing you with a good education and is working to improve further.

We hope that you will take the time to read the full report, but I have highlighted the key points below.

- Your school is well led and managed.
- You develop into confident, articulate and mature young people.
- Teaching and learning are good. The assessment for learning sheets are a key feature of lessons and encourage you to take responsibility for your learning.
- You make good progress in lessons and the standards you achieve by the end of Year 11 and in the sixth form are broadly average.
- The curriculum is outstanding and it is regularly reviewed to best meet your differing abilities, backgrounds and interests. You particularly enjoy the fortnightly 'Flexible Fridays'.
- Your attendance has improved and it is now satisfactory.
- You know your targets and excellent systems are in place to track your progress and provide you with information on how to improve.
- Your behaviour is good, although a few of you behave inappropriately at times.
- You receive outstanding care and support, which you appreciate and value.

To improve things further, we have asked the school to:

- improve the progress you make by building on recent initiatives to improve your attendance
- in order to raise standards further, develop your literacy skills through subject teaching across the curriculum
- develop approaches to improvement planning, using clear success criteria, so that data is more effectively used to inform future actions.

You can help by improving your attendance at school and making the most of the opportunities offered both in and out of lessons.

Yours faithfully

Angela Corbett

Her Majesty's Inspector