

# Longhill High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114581
<b>Local Authority</b>	Brighton and Hove
<b>Inspection number</b>	357576
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 September 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Metcalf

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1202
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Martin Andrews
<b>Headteacher</b>	Hayden Stride
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	31 October 2007
<b>School address</b>	Falmer Road Brighton BN2 7FR
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 32 lessons taught by 28 teachers. Meetings were held with staff, governors and students. Inspectors looked at a wide range of data and documentation including the school development plan, school policies, assessment data, governing body minutes and the school's evaluation of its work. The responses to questionnaires completed by staff, students and 147 parents and carers were also analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the achievement of girls, boys and higher-attaining students
- performance in the specialist and core subjects
- students' understanding of living in a culturally diverse society
- literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.

## Information about the school

Longhill High School is an oversubscribed school on the eastern edge of Brighton and Hove. The number of students at the school has continued to increase in recent years, resulting in an additional form of entry from 2010. Most students are from White British heritage and the proportion who are eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above national averages. One third of these statements refer to behaviour, emotional and social difficulties and another third are targeted at specific learning difficulties. The school has a Sportsmark Gold award, an Artsmark Silver award and the Healthy Schools Silver award. It was given specialist status in technology in September 2003.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

### Main findings

Longhill High School is a good school. Students join the school with standards that are broadly in line with national averages but there is a wide spread of ability and fewer higher attaining students. The proportion of students attaining five A\* to C GCSE passes has increased. Given the students' starting points, this represents good progress. Vulnerable and disadvantaged students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress because of the care and support they receive.

The school makes good use of available data to track students, address possible weaknesses and ensure that they realise their potential. The most recent analysis of data has identified successes in terms of middle-attaining boys and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school is now focused on raising attainment for higher-attaining students and improving results in the specialist technology and core subjects. While there have been notable successes in mathematics, science and the specialist subjects in 2010, the school recognises that

The quality of teaching is good as a result of shared practice, joint planning, peer observations and focused professional development. The school has introduced a rigorous monitoring programme to ensure that teaching consistently engages students' interest and promotes better behaviour and more positive attitudes to learning. For example, in an outstanding Year 10 horticulture lesson, students were motivated and engaged by the teacher through her sensitive regard for their individual needs and the challenge offered by the work.

The care and support provided to promote learning, personal development and well-being is good. The school has been highly responsive to changes in the catchment area which have significantly increased the proportion of students with attendance and/or behaviour issues. The school has provided additional training for staff, appointed further learning mentors, and worked closely with external agencies. Although these initiatives look promising, they have not yet had the intended impact on the attendance and behaviour of all students.

The school has worked successfully to address all issues from the last inspection, particularly weaknesses in teaching and assessment. Senior leaders, managers and the governing body have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have responded decisively to changes in the school's catchment area, and efforts to improve attendance and behaviour by engaging with parents and carers and strengthening community involvement are starting to pay off. Given the rate of improvement since the last inspection, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is good.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve students' progress in the coming year by
  - earlier identification and support of students who are persistently absent
  - encouraging local communities to value good attendance
  - working with parents and carers to reduce fixed-term exclusions.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Students' attainment is in line with national averages, with an improvement in 2010 and evidence of further improvement in 2011 confirmed by lesson observations and scrutiny of students' work. There is no discernible difference between the performance of girls and boys. Students' learning and progress are generally good, as the school makes effective use of data to identify, support and track the attainment of different groups. That said, performance in mathematics, science and some specialist subjects is inconsistent. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the close, well-targeted support they receive.

Behaviour is good and students conduct themselves in a safe and sensible manner inside and outside of the classroom. The number of fixed-term exclusions is high and the school has identified a small but persistent group of students who figure prominently in these statistics. The school is working hard to reduce the numbers, including introducing additional support and working more closely with the local community. The number of fixed term exclusions is now falling. The school has not permanently excluded a student in the past three years.

Attendance is broadly average and the school is working hard to reduce the number of persistent absentees with a range of strategies supported by the Behaviour and Attendance Support Team. The number of persistent absentees had been reducing, but increased in 2010. The school acknowledges the need to identify and support persistent absentees at a much earlier stage as well as engaging parents and carers, and ensuring the support of the local community.

Students' achievement is good and their questionnaires confirm that they enjoy school. They engage well in their lessons and relationships are harmonious and supportive. They feel safe in and around the school and say that any incidents of bullying and harassment are dealt with effectively. Students are aware of healthy lifestyles and confirm that the school provides healthy food at affordable prices. The school also provides an extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities to stay fit and healthy. The extent to which students develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being is only satisfactory and, for a very small minority of students, limited by their persistent absence.

Students make a good contribution to the school and wider community, as shown through a very wide range of activities, including working with local primary schools and raising money for local charities. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

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development is good and they have a good understanding of living in a culturally diverse society. Students engage effectively with a range of groups from different ethnic, religious and socio-economic backgrounds.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good and most students confirm that they learn a lot in lessons. The strengths of lessons observed include their good pace and teachers' secure subject knowledge as well as their awareness of examination requirements. In less successful lessons, the work did not always cater sufficiently well for the spread of ability. Teachers occasionally dominated lessons by talking too much, while question and answer sessions were not always used to engage all students and check their understanding. The quality of marking is good and all students are given subject-specific targets so that they know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum is broad and balanced, with the recently introduced 'Opening Minds' curriculum offering a coordinated approach in Years 7 and 8. The introduction of vocational courses has helped to extend the curricular offer and the school has fully

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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engaged itself with the diploma programme. The range of technology options on offer in Years 10 and 11 has been further extended to include GCSE textiles. Literacy and numeracy across the curriculum are well supported but not yet sufficiently developed across all subjects. Extra-curricular and enrichment activities are extensive, with high numbers of students involved.

The school has developed robust systems to support all students in the school through a strong house system. Transition arrangements from primary to secondary school and from secondary to post-16 education and training are thorough and well considered. Parents speak highly of the process and one parent commented, 'As a parent, I felt fully informed and as a pupil, he felt prepared.' Safeguarding is good and all staff in the school have received relevant training.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The leadership and management of the school are good and their role in the development of teaching and learning is outstanding. The senior leadership team and middle leaders have worked tirelessly to address the weaknesses in teaching identified in the last report. Rigorous monitoring has markedly improved teaching to its good, and sometimes higher, quality. Data is used very effectively to highlight underperformance and target interventions, and senior leaders are ambitious to see more excellent teaching. The governing body is influential in supporting the strategic direction of the school and holding the leaders to account. Governors have an increasing role within the school and have established appropriate protocols for working with departments. The governing body have a good awareness of strengths and weaknesses and discharge their statutory duties effectively. Financial management is good. They are beginning to think carefully about how they might engage more successfully with all parents. The school has clear policies, strategies and procedures in place to safeguard the welfare of all students and meets all required duties. The promotion of equal opportunities is good and every effort is made to tackle any potential discrimination. Robust systems of identification of groups, based on information such as special educational needs, physical disability, socio-economic status, ethnicity and postcode, is routinely carried out and shared with staff. The school is highly committed to working in partnership and takes a leading role in a range of significant activities associated with the school specialism, including support for food technology in partner primary schools. The school

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works resolutely to engage itself with a range of community groups locally and nationally to support its commitment to promote community cohesion and raise awareness of young people in other countries. There are strong links with local schools, local universities and the youth service as well as inclusion-related projects with the Woodingdean Youth Centre and the Crew Club in Whitehawk.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Views of parents and carers

The Ofsted questionnaire was returned by about 10% of parents and carers. Of those that responded, a very large majority said their child enjoyed school and that their needs were being met by the school. Parents and guardians agreed that their child is making enough progress and that the school keeps them informed about this. A very small minority of parents were concerned about unacceptable behaviour and this was identified in the student questionnaires also. The inspectors did not find evidence to endorse these concerns as students' behaviour in lessons and around the school was



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generally good. Parents and carers, students and staff agree that the school is well led and managed.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Longhill High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	50	34	88	60	7	5	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	47	32	90	61	6	4	2	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	50	34	85	58	4	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	22	89	61	11	7	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	33	22	98	67	7	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	27	86	59	13	9	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	17	96	65	13	9	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	41	28	96	65	5	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	22	95	65	9	6	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	24	77	52	21	14	5	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	16	84	57	17	12	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	58	39	73	50	2	1	4	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	54	37	82	56	3	2	3	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



16 September 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Longhill High School, Falmer Road, Brighton, BN2 7FR

On behalf of the inspection team, I am writing to thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently and to tell you about our findings during the inspection.

We agreed that your school is a good school. Examination results are improving and we have asked the school to continue to work on improving results in the specialist and core subjects. The quality of teaching is good and our lesson observations confirm the positive relationships which exist between you and your teachers. The care and support provided by the school are good and we agreed that the school made a good contribution to the local and wider community. We were pleased to read your positive responses to the student questionnaire and to hear that you enjoy school and feel safe.

We have asked your headteacher and his staff to make some improvements in the following areas.

- improve students' attainment in the specialist and core subjects.
- Use information more effectively to help identify how to improve attendance for some of you and to reduce exclusions where possible.

Thank you for your contribution to the inspection and very best wishes for your future happiness and success.

Yours sincerely

Paul Metcalf

Lead Inspector

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