

Longcroft School

Burton Road, Molescroft, Beverley, HU17 7EJ

Inspection dates 13–14 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Very strong leadership, including that of the governing body, is driving secure and sustainable improvements in teaching and students' achievement at a very fast pace.
- Students are making increasingly good progress. The proportion of students achieving five GCSE grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, increased markedly in 2012 and early entry results and the school's assessment data indicate further improvement this year.
- Teaching has improved rapidly. It is good overall with some pockets of outstanding practice, particularly in English and mathematics. Teachers from across the curriculum are contributing well to the effective development of students' literacy skills.
- Students' behaviour has improved and is good in and out of lessons. Students work very well together in groups and are polite and respectful. They say that they feel safe at school.
- The arrival of the headteacher provided a catalyst for change. He has a very ambitious vision for the school and has re-energised the staff. He is very ably supported by the senior and middle leaders who are relishing new challenges and growing from strength to strength.
- The governing body, under the leadership of the new Chair, is monitoring the school's performance extremely well and holding the school to account.
- The sixth form is good and improving. Sixth-formers make good progress. Teaching is good and students have a mature approach to learning. Leadership of the sixth form is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Too few students have achieved the highest grades at GCSE and A-level.
- Not enough teaching is outstanding and a very small amount is inadequate.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 43 lessons. They were taught by different teachers and included all age groups and a wide range of subjects. All teachers were offered feedback but a small number did not take up the offer.
- Meetings were held with members of the senior leadership team and subject leaders. Inspectors also met with members of the governing body, an officer from the local authority and four groups of students. Inspectors scrutinised students' work and read documentation, including those relating to students' progress, self-evaluation, improvement-planning and governance.
- Informal discussions took place with other staff and students during lesson observations and around the school.
- The inspectors took account of the 48 responses to the on-line questionnaire, 'Parent View', and 40 responses to the staff inspection survey.

Inspection team

Jan Bennett, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Keith Massett

Additional Inspector

Steven Goldsmith

Additional Inspector

Andrew Henderson

Additional Inspector

Cathy Morgan

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- Longcroft School is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is slightly above the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Most students are White British.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium (extra funding provided by the government for students who are entitled to free school meals, looked after by the local authority or are children of service families) is smaller than average.
- The school meets the government's present floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Individual students are occasionally educated off site at the local pupil referral unit or further education college. Three students are currently in alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of students achieving the highest grades by making sure that the most-able students are stretched and challenged in every lesson.
- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use effective questioning to check learning, probe understanding and draw quieter students into the discussion
 - making sure that students are given as many opportunities as possible to take responsibility for their own learning and teachers do not spend too much time talking.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students join the school with starting points that are around average. In 2012, the proportion of Year 11 students obtaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, rose to just above average. However, these results were significantly higher than the national average when considering GCSE results and no other equivalent qualifications.
- Year 11 students are making up lost ground very quickly as a result of rapidly improving teaching and very effective interventions that compensate for weak teaching in the past. Early entry GCSE grades and modular assessment results show a marked improvement on last year. Changes to the policy on early entry and re-sits in English and mathematics are enabling students to achieve the highest grades possible. Prior to this year students moved on to study AS modules rather than try to improve their grade.
- The school's tracking data is robust and students' progress is reviewed every six weeks. The data show that students' progress is much better than in previous years and is accelerating at a fast pace.
- The performance of those students attracting pupil premium funding has improved more rapidly than that of other students over the last three years. The attainment of students eligible for free school meals is significantly higher than that of similar students nationally but there is still a gap between the average points score of these students and others in school. The gap is closing, however, as teachers become more adept at meeting their needs.
- Students who are disabled or have special educational needs make good progress. A very wide range of successful strategies has been developed which are meeting students' learning, social and physical needs. Interventions are leading to very positive improvements and students who are disabled or have special educational needs made good or better progress in lessons observed by inspectors. Any gaps in performance are closing quickly.
- Students' literacy skills are developed well across all subjects. Students answer questions confidently and make carefully considered contributions to discussions. They work well in groups and are good listeners and confident readers. They are also becoming increasingly skilled at assessing each other's work and giving constructive feedback. Effective interventions, partly funded by the pupil premium, help students with weak reading skills, especially in Year 7, to catch up.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good. Students enter the sixth form with prior attainment that is lower than average and make better progress than that of similar students nationally. Sixth-formers take responsibility for their own learning and they made good progress in almost all the lessons observed by inspectors. Not enough are making the outstanding progress that would lead to the highest A Level grades.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The rapid rise in the quality of teaching has made a major contribution to improvements in students' achievements. Teaching is good or better in a large majority of lessons and inadequate teaching has almost been eradicated.
- Teachers plan interesting activities that engage and motivate students. Many tasks provide opportunities for students to discuss ideas and work in small groups. Students respond well and enjoy this type of learning. However, a small number of teachers are still talking too much and dominating the lesson.
- Most lessons move at a very lively pace and teachers make sure that students are not left behind. Opportunities to really push the brightest students are sometimes missed, however.
- In the best lessons teachers are not afraid to hand responsibility for learning over to the students. In an outstanding mathematics lesson, students were tasked with developing a method for solving quadratic equations. They worked on large whiteboards strategically placed

around the room so that the teacher could see at a glance the progress they were making. She used skilful questioning to keep them on track or give discussions a 'kick start' when progress stalled. In another outstanding lesson, students had to choose for themselves whether to do further consolidation exercises or try more challenging questions.

- In most lessons questioning is used well by teachers to recap on learning, check understanding, stretch thinking and keep everyone on their toes. In the best lessons teachers ask the most-able students very searching questions to make them think and give less-able students opportunities to contribute by asking more straightforward questions. In some of the weaker lessons, however, questioning is less effective.
- Teaching assistants are used very well in most lessons. They are deployed very effectively by the teacher, play a valuable part in the lesson and contribute very well to learning. For example, one teaching assistant made an excellent contribution to numeracy development in a lesson in which students were selecting recipes for a children's party. She asked well-judged questions about timings and quantities that really made the students think.
- The quality of marking and written feedback is of a consistently good standard and tells students how to improve their work. Many students are putting the comments and suggestions to good use but not all teachers are checking that students have taken their advice on board.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour at break and lunchtime is good and movement around the school is very calm and orderly. Students move very purposefully between the two buildings in order to get to lessons as quickly as possible. Students are friendly and courteous and show consideration for each other and adults.
- Behaviour in lessons is good and students have very positive attitudes to learning. They contribute well to discussions and listen carefully to each other's views. The distance between the buildings means that students do not always arrive at the same time to lessons but they settle to learning very quickly with a minimum of fuss. Students respond very well to opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Students say that they feel safe in school and know how to protect themselves out of school when using social networking sites, for example. They understand the different types of bullying and how to deal with them. They say that incidents of bullying are rare and school records support this. Parents and staff have few concerns about behaviour.
- There have been no permanent exclusions this year. There was an initial rise in the number of fixed-term exclusions earlier this year in response to some atypical behaviour in Year 8. Strategies to tackle the issues have now been introduced and the number of fixed-term exclusions is falling as the new initiatives begin to have an impact.
- Behaviour is managed well and continues to improve at pace. All aspects of behaviour and safety are monitored and evaluated carefully.

The leadership and management are good

- Staff and students recognise the key role that the headteacher has played in moving the school forward very quickly in a short time. They say that he has a very clear vision for the school and provides inspiration and encouragement. Morale is high. Since his arrival he has been uncompromising in his determination to improve teaching and raise achievement. Together with senior leaders, he has introduced high quality training and a new, transparent quality assurance system both of which are successfully underpinning the continuing drive for further improvement.
 - Leaders have very clear roles and responsibilities. Senior and middle leadership are strong and improving. Middle leaders are taking more responsibility for driving improvement in their areas
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and are supported well by senior leaders and each other.

- A new performance management system has been introduced that is very robust. Teachers no longer progress up the pay scale automatically but have to meet demanding standards before applying for progression. Leaders, including the headteacher, also have exacting performance targets.
 - Curriculum changes have been planned well and are contributing to the accelerating progress made by students across the school. The introduction of a three-year Key Stage 4 has increased the choice of subjects available and created more time for English and mathematics. The sixth-form curriculum is under regular review to make sure that it continues to meet students' needs. Students' personal development is good and the curriculum makes a good contribution to the social, moral and cultural development of students. Spiritual awareness is less well-developed.
 - Alternative provision is used well to ensure that the most vulnerable students do not disengage from education. The school has very effective systems in place to monitor their behaviour, safety and attendance.
 - The local authority supports the school extremely well. Advisors carry out regular reviews that provide leaders with an independent assessment of the progress being made and highlight any areas of concern.
 - The school's arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The new governing body is very impressive and has played an important role in driving improvements so quickly. Governors have introduced a business-like approach and are constantly looking at ways to improve their practice. They have become more efficient and effective by streamlining the committee structure. They receive regular reports on the school's progress, from senior leaders and the local authority, which gives them a very accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have the skills and knowledge to challenge senior leaders when necessary and are actively involved in setting the school's priorities. Governors are also keen to support the school in other ways. Many make time to visit students on work placement, for example. Financial management is tight and although the governing body has not monitored the impact of pupil premium funding in the past, they are now receiving regular updates.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	118073
Local authority	East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number	408831

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,339
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	176
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Samantha Gorman
Headteacher	Ian O'Donnell
Date of previous school inspection	18 April 2012
Telephone number	01482 862171
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