

Longhill High School

Falmer Road, Rottingdean, Brighton, BN2 7FR

Inspection dates 22–23 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Too few students, particularly those eligible for the pupil premium, make the expected progress in English and mathematics.
- Teachers sometimes do not use questioning sufficiently well to check students' understanding or to extend their learning.
- Some teachers do not plan work that matches students' different abilities.
- The early entry of students for GCSE English language has not helped them to attain the highest grades at GCSE.
- Fixed-term exclusions have been much higher than average during recent years. However, they are now reducing.
- Some teachers do not provide students with adequate guidance on how to improve their work, or check that they have acted on advice. This slows students' progress.
- Students' behaviour in lessons reflects the quality of teaching. Where teaching is weaker, students are not always fully involved with their learning and there are too few opportunities for them to work independently.
- School leaders' and governors' judgements about the school's performance are overgenerous and not consistent with information about students' progress and achievement.
- School leaders, including governors, have not rigorously monitored the impact of the pupil premium.

The school has the following strengths:

- Some students make better than expected progress in English and mathematics.
- The 2013 GCSE results demonstrate a significant improvement in the percentage of students making the expected progress in mathematics.
- Students, particularly those who are eligible for the pupil premium, are now attending school more regularly and consequently are beginning to make better progress.
- Support for students with special educational needs is carefully planned and skilful leadership of this aspect of the school's work ensures that these students make at least good progress.
- Students feel safe and show respect for adults and one another.
- Systems for tracking students' achievement provide accurate information about their progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 30 lessons, of which 16 were joint observations with senior staff. Inspectors examined students' books, talked to students about their work, and heard students read.
- Inspectors observed other aspects of the school day, including an assembly and students' behaviour at break and lunchtime.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, teaching staff, and five groups of students. Representatives from the governing body and three representatives from the local authority were also interviewed.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 102 parents and carers who responded to Parent View, the online questionnaire, a phone call from a parent or carer, and four written comments from parents and carers. They also considered the 36 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school's own data on students' recent examinations and current progress, the school's self-evaluation and development plan, information on the quality of teaching and the support and coaching arrangements for teachers, records of checks on students' behaviour and attendance, safeguarding policies and records and details of governance.

Inspection team

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Full report

Information about this school

- Longhill High School is a larger than average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds. Few are from minority ethnic backgrounds or speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium, which in this school provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and students known to be eligible for free school meals, is above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- A small number of Key Stage 4 students follow alternative courses on site in the Focus Centre.
- A small number of students attend specialist dyslexia provision on site.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise students' achievement, especially that of those students eligible for the pupil premium, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - plan activities that challenge and motivate students so that the pace of learning enables all of them to make at least good progress
 - create more opportunities for students to play an active part in their lessons and to work independently
 - mark students' work in a way that provides them with clear guidance on how to improve their work, and allows them time to reflect and act on the advice given.
- Improve students' behaviour and reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions by ensuring that students of all abilities are always engaged in learning.
- Ensure that leadership, management and governance are effective in improving achievement by ensuring that:
 - examination results and information from the monitoring of teaching and the tracking of students' achievement are always accurately interpreted in order that students are more effectively supported to make good or better progress
 - leaders at all levels, including governors, have a good understanding of the performance of the school
 - the entire pupil premium is spent for the benefit of those students who are eligible.
- An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the school's use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management should be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Too many students are not making consistently good progress in English and mathematics.
- The proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, remains below average.
- In 2012, students eligible for the pupil premium attained approximately two grades lower in English and one and two-thirds lower in mathematics when compared to other students in the school.
- Many students were entered for GCSE English at the end of Year 10 so that they could concentrate on English literature in Year 11. This limited the progress of students and prevented some from attaining the highest grades.
- Students' GCSE results are improving. The percentage of students attaining five or more GCSE A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, rose significantly in 2012, and the 2013 unvalidated results show further improvement. More students made the expected progress in GCSE mathematics in 2013, closing the gap between the school and the national average.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs, including those who receive specialist dyslexia teaching, are very well supported because their needs are well known and help from additional adults is used very effectively to support their learning. Consequently, these students make good progress and achieve well.
- Students eligible for the pupil premium and those eligible for the Year 7 catch-up programme receive additional help and guidance. Their attendance is improving and consequently they are beginning to make better progress. Unvalidated results from the 2013 examinations and data for current students show that the gap between students eligible for the pupil premium and others in the school is beginning to close.
- Students attending the Focus Centre are monitored effectively and are integrated into some regular lessons. The attendance and behaviour of these students are improving and they make similar progress to their peers.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching has not been consistently good enough over time to lead to good progress for all students. There is still some teaching which requires improvement or is inadequate.
- Where teaching requires improvement, teachers do not plan activities that challenge and motivate all students. In some lessons the pace of learning is too slow to enable all students to make at least good progress or there are too few opportunities for students to play an active part in their lessons and to work independently. Sometimes teachers do not use questioning to check students' understanding or to extend their learning.
- Although students eligible for the pupil premium are known to their teachers, teaching does not always support these students to make the expected progress and teachers' expectations are too often influenced by the social background of these students.
- Much teaching is good, and some is outstanding. Where teaching is most successful, students are fully involved in their own learning and are aware of what they need to do to improve. For example, in an outstanding Year 10 drama lesson on physical theatre, because the teacher clearly understood the needs of the students and had used a variety of resources to motivate them and engage their interest, they worked exceptionally well in groups and produced high-quality outcomes.
- Teachers' marking is of variable quality. The best practice, most notably in English, provides students with clear guidance on how to improve their work and teachers allow time for students to reflect and act on the advice given. However, this good practice is not evident in all subjects and some students do not know how their work is assessed or how their progress is monitored.

- The school has a policy to promote literacy and as a consequence students enjoy reading and, where support in school is focused on reading, they read at above their expected level.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- There are too many lessons where students are not actively engaged or where low-level disruption slows their learning. This is generally where teaching does not fully meet the needs of all students and there is a lack of pace or challenge.
- Where teaching is good or better, behaviour in lessons is mostly good and students' attitudes to learning are generally positive. However, some students feel that behaviour is dependent on the teacher and that teachers' responses to poor behaviour are inconsistent.
- The system of rewards encourages students to behave well. However, some students felt that the 'naughty students' were rewarded too readily.
- Students behave well around the school. They feel safe and their relationships with one another are positive. The school is described as a 'happy place' by staff. The school works hard to prevent discrimination and to make sure all students have an equal opportunity to succeed.
- Students are aware of the different kinds of bullying, including cyber bullying. Very few students who spoke to inspectors had experienced bullying of any kind, although more knew others who had been subject to bullying such as name calling. They told inspectors that when bullying does occur, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff.
- Most of the parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire felt that students are well looked after by the school. However, only just over half believe behaviour at the school to be good.
- Attendance has improved and is now broadly in line with the national average.
- Exclusions in the past have been very high, but the number has started to fall. Students attending the Focus Centre believe that the support provided there has dramatically reduced their risk of exclusion.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Performance data are not always accurately interpreted and therefore the school's overall evaluation of its performance is too generous.
- Too few students make the expected progress in English and mathematics and the gap between the achievement of those eligible for the pupil premium and their peers is still too wide and recently introduced improvement initiatives have not yet had chance to impact fully.
- Teaching is not improving at a fast enough rate and further work needs to be done to share the good practice that exists across the school.
- Sound monitoring systems are in place. Checks on the quality of teaching in lessons are frequent, support is provided where teaching is judged to require improvement and joint observations by inspectors and members of the senior leadership team confirm the accuracy of the school's judgements in the classroom. Senior staff meet regularly with middle leaders to discuss the monitoring of teaching, the outcomes of examinations and assessments and students' behaviour and progress.
- The curriculum is well balanced and meets the needs of students well as shown by the high proportion of students progressing to education, training or employment when they leave at 16. Students appreciate the free choice they have for option subjects in Key Stage 4.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is embedded in the work of the school and students benefit from a range of extra-curricular activities and cultural links.
- The leadership and management of special educational needs are strong. Students benefit from personalised interventions delivered by well-trained staff in supportive settings. Consequently these students make good progress and achieve well.

- The school has a good relationship with the local authority and benefits from partnership working with all the other local secondary schools to improve attendance. However, the local authority's view of the school's overall effectiveness does not take account of the national context and is therefore unrealistic.
- Arrangements for ensuring the safeguarding of students meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance requires improvement. Governors do not compare how well the school is performing with all schools nationally, so their judgements are too generous. Until recently governors accepted the headteacher's recommendation for pay progression without considering the evidence provided, their questioning being limited to issues relating to the number of recommendations. The monitoring of the impact of the pupil premium has not been rigorous enough and the school had an £8,000 underspend at the end of the last financial year. The governing body is now involved in the development of the new appraisal system for teachers and has developed an understanding of the links between performance management, the effectiveness of teaching and salary progression. Governors are committed to the school and, through the training they receive, are growing in their ability to evaluate information provided by the school about the quality of teaching and the achievement of students.

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	114581
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	426688

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,160
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Andrews
Headteacher	Haydn Stride
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 September 2010
Telephone number	01273 304086
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