



Longcroft School and Performing Arts College

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 118073
LEA East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number 280234
Inspection dates 28 September 2005 to 29 September 2005
Reporting inspector Ann Wallis

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Burton Road
School category	Community		Beverley
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		HU17 7EJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01482 862171
Number on roll	1550	Fax number	01482 862872
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr D Wigley
Date of previous inspection	1 December 2003	Headteacher	Mrs L Hughes

Age group 11 to 18	Inspection dates 28 September 2005 - 29 September 2005	Inspection number 280234
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Longcroft School and Performing Arts College is a mixed comprehensive school for pupils aged 11–19. The sixth form has 220 pupils. The school has a split site and serves the town of Beverley and the surrounding rural areas. It has had specialist status as a performing arts college for four years. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The vast majority of pupils come from white British backgrounds and there are very few pupils whose first language is not English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's previous designation as having serious weaknesses no longer applies.

The school judges itself as providing a satisfactory education for all of its pupils and inspectors agree. The serious weaknesses found at the time of the previous inspection have been eliminated. Standards attained by pupils aged 11 to 16 have risen and their progress is satisfactory. The school now needs to sustain the progress it has made in the last two years. It is well placed to do so because the headteacher and a strong senior leadership team have a clear vision for further improvement. They know what needs to be done to address any remaining weaknesses. They have put effective monitoring systems in place to check on performance and to track the progress of pupils. There have been many staff changes in recent years which have resulted in a lack of continuity of teaching for some pupils. These difficulties have now been resolved successfully.

The care, guidance and support of pupils and the attention paid to their personal development and well-being are strong features of the school. Most pupils have good attitudes towards their learning and their enjoyment of school stems from the good working relationships they have with their teachers. Good links exist with external bodies to support the education and welfare of pupils. Specialist status continues to have a positive impact on the curriculum and the range of enrichment activities available to pupils.

Parents are pleased with the education their children receive and pupils feel that their voice is being heard. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The school judges the sixth form to be satisfactory and inspectors agree with this assessment. Results were above average in 2004, but there was a marked decline in 2005 when standards fell to below average. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Although many pupils reached their potential in terms of general certificate of education advanced-level results, the school acknowledges that a minority of them underachieved because of their poor attitudes to learning. After a period of staffing turbulence, the newly appointed sixth form leader has now introduced secure systems for tracking pupils' progress and supporting their learning. Tutors and students are responding well to his higher expectations and open leadership style. Sixth formers feel that they are given good opportunities to take responsibility and that their opinions are acted upon. The sixth form provides satisfactory value for money.

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What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the use of information and communications technology (ICT) across the curriculum to enhance learning.

- Raise the school's expectations of pupils by setting higher targets for them.
- Bring the examination performance of the weaker subjects up to that of the best.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school grades achievement and standards for pupils aged 11 to 16 as satisfactory and inspectors agree with this assessment. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average, although there are more higher attaining pupils than is normal. National test results in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in Year 9 have improved significantly in the last three years. They were above average in 2004 and also in 2005. This represents good progress.

General certificate of secondary education (GCSE) results were broadly average in 2004, and have risen further in 2005. In 2004 pupils attained particularly well in English literature, other sciences and physical education, but less well in art, German, history and ICT. The school is aware that results in some subjects are not yet good enough and have put in place a series of measures to raise standards. Overall in Years 10 and 11, pupils' progress when measured against their capabilities is satisfactory. Their progress in English and mathematics was above average but some weaker subjects depressed their overall achievement. There is no significant variation in the progress of boys and girls when compared to the national picture.

In the sixth form results improved up to 2004 and were above average. Students' progress was good. However, results dropped markedly in 2005. The new sixth form leader is taking effective action to monitor students' progress to ensure that they all reach their full potential.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school believes that personal development and well-being are satisfactory, the evidence from the inspection would indicate they are better than this and are good.

Most pupils behave well, although some pupils say that there is a small minority who disrupt learning. Most pupils have good attitudes to their learning, which is reflected in their enjoyment of the school. Attendance has improved since the previous inspection because of the effective strategies to encourage good attendance and it is now satisfactory. Exclusions of a small minority of pupils have been high but are now falling. Effective support structures are put in place to help these pupils when they return to school. Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility, for example, by serving on the school council. The school council is effective in bringing about change and pupils feel that their views influence the work of the school.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as exemplified in a Year 11 religious education lesson when the pupils sensitively considered the Christian attitudes to life after death. However, the provision for health and well-being lacks coherence and is not yet sufficiently evaluated. Pupils say they are confident that

incidents of bullying will be dealt with effectively and feel safe in school. They appreciate the involvement of the sixth form in the anti-bullying campaign. They show respect for each other and their teachers. Pupils gain self-confidence as they progress through the school and they are prepared well for life in the community and employment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It has many good features and enables pupils in Years 7 to 11 and in the sixth form to make average progress. Parents and pupils think that teaching is good. Inspectors agree with them in many respects, but there are still some shortcomings that require attention.

Teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach and they often bring them to life in an exciting manner. Strong features are the planning of lessons, the clarity of explanations, and the good relationships with pupils. Lessons usually proceed in a purposeful manner. Since the previous inspection, when teaching and learning were unsatisfactory, there has been the successful introduction of a wider variety of teaching methods to maintain the pupils' interest, concentration and effort. There is now sufficient challenge to enable pupils of all levels of attainment to make adequate overall progress across the curriculum. Pupils have sufficient homework to enable them to extend their learning and consolidate skills. However, the potential for the use of ICT to speed the pace of learning in many subjects remains relatively unexplored.

In a minority of lessons, the pace of learning is slow. This is because teachers' introductions can be too long, lessons gather pace slowly, or pupils are left to work on their own for too long. Some pupils have concerns about low level disruption slowing the pace of learning in several subjects. Marking of pupils' work is satisfactory overall. Pupils agree that in most subjects it shows them what to do to improve. There are particularly good examples in English. Pupils understand the targets that the school sets for them. However, these only require pupils to make progress at an average rate. If standards are to rise, targets need to be more challenging.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school offers a satisfactory curriculum which meets statutory requirements and provides a broad and balanced experience for the majority of learners. Specialist status continues to have a positive impact and the provision for creative arts is good. External professional support, for example, a dance workshop led by Wayne Sleep, is very well used to enhance learning and enjoyment. There is a good choice of academic subjects, but the school rightly recognises that it should develop alternative vocational or mixed pathways to meet the needs and aspirations of some students in the 14 to 19 age

range. In the sixth form, students have a good choice of academic courses and may broaden their education by taking general studies and a range of accredited enrichment courses.

Curriculum planning is satisfactory, but it does not fully exploit the potential of ICT to enhance learning. In addition, more consideration should be given to the teaching of sex and relationships education and some aspects of careers education. Pupils are encouraged to develop workplace skills through a well managed work experience programme. In the sixth form, a Young Enterprise scheme enables students to develop and manage a business. There is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school cares for its pupils well. Proper attention is paid to health and safety procedures and risk assessments. Child protection procedures are understood by all staff. Pupils say that they feel safe and can turn to an adult in confidence if they need help or advice. Most pupils know how well they are doing because of the good use of assessment data to monitor their progress. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Good links with parents are maintained through clear and informative written reports and parents' evenings.

The school is strongly committed to providing equally for the well-being of all its pupils. The pastoral system is a strength of the school and is increasingly effective in monitoring pupils' progress. Links with the community and other schools are good; they contribute to smooth transition, particularly into Year 7.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's own judgement that leadership and management are satisfactory because pupils are not yet making better than broadly average progress overall.

The leadership of the headteacher is good and she, together with senior managers has ensured that the main weaknesses noted in the previous inspection have been tackled effectively. A clear and ambitious vision for the school and its further improvement is in place. The school improvement plan establishes an uncompromising agenda for this improvement and staff are responding well to increasing levels of accountability.

There are good quality assurance procedures to track how well pupils are doing, although associated targets are not yet challenging enough. Good systems are in place to check the quality of teaching and to provide support where required. As a result, the school leadership team has a clear view of the school's main strengths and weaknesses, as shown in the accuracy of their self-evaluation. Subject management is satisfactory overall, although varied in quality as shown by the differences in examination performance between subjects.

Governors are experienced and provide strong support. They know the school well through their active links with subjects and other developments. They fulfil their responsibilities well and meet all requirements other than that for collective worship. Staffing and accommodation are managed effectively; resources are used satisfactorily, although too little use is made of ICT to enhance teaching and learning. Financial management is secure and the school achieves satisfactory value for money, largely because pupils make satisfactory rather than better progress.

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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?	3	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	3
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
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	3	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

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?	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	insufficient evidence

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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30 September 2005

Dear Students

Thank you for the welcome you gave to the inspectors and for the valuable contribution that many of you made to this inspection. We were impressed with your positive attitudes and the sensible way that you voice your opinions through the school council. It is clear from your behaviour and attitudes that most of you enjoy school.

What we have said about your school in the inspection report:

your school is satisfactory with some good features and is well placed to improve even further in the future

your standards of work have improved in the last two years and your achievement is satisfactory
teachers support your personal development well and you tell us that you enjoy school and feel safe

your lessons are becoming more interesting and varied than they were before
the care, guidance and support for you are good

your headteacher, senior teachers and all staff have worked hard to improve the school and know what needs doing to make it even better.

What we have asked your school to do now:

develop the use of ICT across the curriculum to enhance your learning

raise their expectations of you by setting higher targets for you

bring the examination results of the weaker subjects up to those of the best.

Your school has improved well since the previous inspection. The serious weaknesses that were found at that time have been eliminated and things that still need to be improved are being dealt with successfully. You have every reason to be proud to be a pupil at Longcroft and we hope that you continue to work hard and add to the school's success.

Yours sincerely

A Wallis

Lead Inspector

Annex B