

Inspection of Longbenton High School

Hailsham Avenue, Longbenton, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE12 8ER

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Longbenton High is a caring school. Parents and carers say that the school knows its pupils well. Pupils enjoy school and say that teachers and staff help them to achieve. During the pandemic, the school made sure that all pupils had the chance to continue learning. The school provided pupils with the resources and support they needed.

Recently appointed leaders have raised the expectations they have of pupils. Because of this, the school and pupils' work has improved.

Behaviour around the school site is calm and purposeful. Many pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. Sometimes, pupils find it difficult to focus on their learning. A minority of pupils find it difficult to focus in lessons. This can disrupt learning. When this happens, this behaviour is not addressed consistently well by staff. When incidents of bullying occur, leaders are quick to act to resolve these. As a result, pupils say that they feel safe at the school.

Most pupils attend school regularly and arrive on time. However, while most pupils arrive at school on time, too many come into school too late, too often.

Pupils study a wide and varied curriculum. In Year 9, leaders have made sure there is enough time for pupils to study some subjects in even more depth. This helps them to choose their key stage 4 options.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Since the previous inspection, leaders have strengthened the curriculum and made sure it is more ambitious. In all subjects, leaders carefully sequence learning. This helps pupils to know and remember curriculum content.

In most subjects, teachers check pupils' learning. This helps them to know what pupils are understanding and remembering. In science and history for example, teachers use assessment well to check pupils' understanding. This informs their teaching, and helps pupils to apply their knowledge to good effect. However, in mathematics, these checks are not used as well to identify gaps in understanding. This means that some pupils in mathematics do not always have the understanding that they need to learn the next idea.

There are also some differences in how assessment is being used across the school. For example, some departments are collecting information differently to others. Leaders have made sure that all approaches to assessment meet with their expectations.

Leaders have extended the range of subjects in the sixth form. They have done this in partnership with another local school. This means that students can follow courses that lead to a wider variety of pathways than in the past.

Leaders recognise that developing reading support is a priority. The school has appointed experienced staff to develop a phonics-based approach. This will help pupils who struggle with reading to catch up quickly.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the curriculum alongside their peers. This is because of the good support they get. Teaching assistants work with individual pupils when needed. They encourage pupils to talk about their learning. Pupils get involved in lessons by answering questions and giving their opinions. Teachers use information about pupils to adapt plans and meet pupils' needs. This means that pupils with SEND make strong progress.

Pupils generally behave well and most have positive attitudes to learning. However, a minority of pupils do not meet the high expectations the school has of them. When this happens, these expectations for good behaviour are not reinforced as well as they should be. Most pupils attend regularly, but too many arrive to school late. Leaders are doing everything they can to improve the attendance of a group of pupils who are often absent.

Leaders have worked hard to strengthen pupils' personal development. They have made changes to the school pastoral system. For example, they have introduced a house system. Form tutors deliver the personal development programme. The programme supports pupils to become confident young people. It prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Pupils are keen to have extra responsibilities. For example, by being members of the equality group. Students in the sixth form have the opportunity and the voice to discuss challenging issues from current affairs. For example, students discussed how recent decisions by the Supreme Court of the United States affected women's rights. Effective careers guidance helps pupils to make decisions about their next steps. Pupils in Year 10 complete work experience. They are also supported with applications for college and apprenticeships.

Governors are ambitious for the school and its pupils. They know the school's strengths and they know what needs further development. They provide effective challenge and support. Staff enjoy working at the school and believe that leaders are mindful of their workload and well-being when making changes. Leaders use high quality external programmes of professional training to support staff development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that their processes for safeguarding and child protection are robust and clear. All staff receive effective training to be able to recognise and report any concerns about a pupil's well-being or safety.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet. Pre-employment checks ensure that the adults the school employs are suitable to work with children.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The systems to monitor pupils' punctuality to school are not yet robust enough. As a result, a significant number of pupils do not arrive to school on time. Leaders should further develop the monitoring of punctuality so that pupils' punctuality improves.
- The expectations which staff have in terms of the behaviour of pupils is inconsistent. Consequently, some pupils lose focus. This disrupts learning. Teachers do not address this to consistent effect. Leaders should work with staff so that they are more effective in addressing behaviour which disrupts learning. This will enable all pupils to learn well.
- In a minority of subjects, teachers do not check pupils' understanding as well as in others. This leads to gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should ensure that teachers check pupils' understanding consistently well. This will enable pupils to build knowledge more effectively over time. It will also help them to produce work of higher quality.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	108645
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	10229102
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	894
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	77
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sheila Palmerley
Headteacher	Kelly Holbrook
Website	www.longbenton.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 and 14 November 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A small number of pupils attend off-site alternative provision at Moorbridge.
- The school works in partnership with George Stephenson High School to deliver some sixth form programmes of study.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, a local authority representative and members of the governing body. They also met with subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.

- Inspectors focused most closely on these subjects: English, mathematics, science and history. This involved examining subject plans, visits to lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work, talking to pupils about their work and talking to teachers.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead and looked at the records of the actions taken by leaders to protect pupils at risk. They spoke with pupils, staff and school leaders about safeguarding.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the checks undertaken on newly appointed staff. They considered information about pupils' behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. They spoke with pupils to discuss their views of the school.
- Inspectors spoke to different members of staff, including recently qualified teachers and support staff to seek their views about how well pupils behave.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and considered responses to the questionnaire for staff. Inspectors also considered responses to the questionnaire for pupils.

Inspection team

Barry Found, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Garry Stout	Ofsted Inspector
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