

Longspee Academy

Learoyd Road, Canford Heath, Poole BH17 8PJ

Inspection dates	10–11 March 2016
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Outstanding leadership and leaders' uncompromising drive to provide the very best education for pupils have led to rapid and significant improvement since Longspee School became an academy.
- Strong support and challenge provided by the Ambitions Academy Trust are highly effective in the school's continual improvement.
- All leaders and staff have the highest expectations for their pupils. As a result, pupils in all groups make outstanding progress from their starting points in their academic and personal development.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and the next steps needed to improve the school even further.
- The Ambitions Academy Trust is highly effective in identifying future leaders. It provides high-quality training and coaching, which are having a very positive impact on developing leaders' skills and improving the effectiveness of the school.
- The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teachers precisely assess pupils' starting points when they join the school. They set ambitious and aspirational individual targets to ensure that every pupil makes outstanding progress, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Leaders routinely and rigorously check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Teachers receive personalised feedback and training, which has resulted in significant improvements in teaching and pupils' learning and outcomes.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are exceptionally strong. Pupils trust their teachers and demonstrate great respect to adults and to each other.
- The school's drive to instil the values of 'respect, tolerance and the rule of law' permeates all aspects of the school's work and underpins pupils' outstanding personal development.
- Pupils are very well cared for and kept safe at Longspee. As a result, pupils feel secure and develop outstanding attitudes to learning. This is preparing them well for the next stage of their education. They leave with greater confidence, independence and rapid gains in their academic and personal development.
- The school's creative curriculum supports pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development successfully. Pupils experience a wide range of carefully planned experiences both in and outside school, such as art, music and sport. This broadens their learning and develops their self-esteem and self-confidence.
- The governors visit the school regularly and challenge and support leaders to improve the school's effectiveness and performance even further.
- Middle leaders, including those new to their roles, are effective. Nonetheless, senior leaders have plans in place to develop their roles even further to provide high-quality support to colleagues both at Longspee and in the trust's other schools.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the role of middle leaders so that the impact of their work continues to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment both at Longspee Academy and at the other schools in the Ambitions Academy Trust.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- Since the school became an academy, leaders have driven significant improvement at Longspee. They have been highly effective because of their unshakeable belief that every pupil has the potential to succeed and achieve, both in their academic and personal development. Leaders are aspirational and ambitious for the pupils and their school. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress, typically from low starting points.
- Leaders hold staff fully to account for the quality of their teaching and the learning and progress of their pupils. This approach is fully accepted by staff and results in continual improvement for staff and pupils alike. Leaders are held fully to account by the Ambitions Academy Trust. This represents a transformation in culture and is at the heart of the school's success. Although strong support is continually provided, a 'no-excuses culture' is well established and understood by staff, resulting in high-quality teaching and exceptional outcomes for pupils.
- The associate principal leads a strong and committed team. Its members are passionate about their work and demonstrate a determination that pupils should achieve their best. She has ensured that all staff share in the school's vision, 'High expectations lead to high achievers'. Leaders have worked tirelessly to establish a positive culture and climate for learning. The school is calm and pupils understand and abide by the clear routines and very high expectations. This supports their learning very effectively.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and next steps for improvement. In particular, they have been very successful in shifting the school's core purpose to focus relentlessly on 'learning'. Leaders undertake detailed assessments of pupils' key skills when they join the school. This enables them to plan and implement personalised learning targets, which results in rapid and sustained progress in pupils' academic and personal development.
- Leaders have driven significant improvements in the quality of teaching. All staff take part in regular training and leaders benefit from coaching to further develop their leadership skills. As a result, the school has established agreed approaches to teaching, learning and assessment that are highly successful in rapidly improving pupils' outcomes.
- The school's key values of 'respect, tolerance and the rule of law' are fully embedded in all aspects of their work. Pupils learn to consider others, show respect and understand right from wrong. Leaders ensure that all staff implement the school's consistent approach to awarding 'credits' and 'rewards' for good behaviour and excellent learning and behaviour. In addition, pupils learn that there are consequences for their actions. As a result, the school is now a harmonious community based on clear routines, high expectations and respect for others.
- Pupils have a good understanding of democracy. They learn to debate issues and improvements for the school in their school council. For example, they tackle subjects such as 'What are the Houses of Parliament used for?' and regularly take part in elections for new members of their council. As a result, pupils feel very involved and valued in their school community. 'I love it here. I couldn't read or spell when I got here and now I am reading 'The Lord of the Rings',' was a typical comment heard during the inspection.
- The school's chosen creative curriculum includes a wide range of subjects, experiences and trips to support learning. For example, during the enrichment afternoon, pupils have opportunities to take part in art, music, design and technology, and sport. This extends their learning by engaging them in exciting and interesting learning tasks. They learn to cooperate and are supported in managing some very anxious behaviours. This contributes well to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development as well as their academic development.
- Leaders and governors are highly successful in ensuring that disadvantaged pupils achieve well. There are no achievement gaps to close because of the relentless focus on the teaching and learning of these pupils. Carefully planned interventions, such as one-to-one support for reading and sessions to develop social and communication skills, have contributed effectively to removing barriers to learning. In addition, pupils in Year 7 who need to catch up in literacy and numeracy receive intensive support, which ensures that they improve their key skills rapidly.
- The sports premium funding is used to extend the range of sporting opportunities and to increase participation. Pupils benefit from high-quality teaching, which develops their sports talents and also strong social and communication skills.

- The Ambitions Academy Trust schools work closely together to share expertise, develop leadership roles and provide support to each other. In addition, leaders at Longspee provide behaviour management support to local schools in Poole, which is highly successful. Middle leaders at Longspee have a positive impact in supporting colleagues to improve their teaching and also in driving improvements in their subjects. Senior leaders acknowledge that middle leaders, including those new to their role, are now ready to develop the impact of their work even further, including providing support for other schools in the trust.

■ **The governance of the school**

- Governors are committed and determined to continue to improve the school. They provide effective challenge and support to leaders to check the learning and progress of all pupils. Minutes from meetings confirm that they have a relentless focus on the achievement of all groups, including the disadvantaged and most-able pupils. They bring a wide range of appropriate experience to their role, which enables them to check pupils' achievement for themselves. They follow this up with challenging and insightful questions to leaders. As a result, they demonstrate an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the school's effectiveness. The school's capacity for further improvement is strong.
- Governors have a deep understanding of the use and impact of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and the sports premium funding. They hold leaders and staff to account for the quality of teaching and the progress of every pupil. Governors are fully involved in evaluating the associate principal's performance. They have a thorough understanding of the quality of teaching and oversee the management of teachers' performance to ensure continued improvement.

■ **The arrangements for safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All leaders and staff are uncompromising in their determination to keep pupils safe. Staff receive regular training to enable them to recognise and act on signs of harm or risk and to keep up to date with all current government legislation. This includes the school's response to the Prevent duty (government advice to schools to have due regard to the need to identify signs of extremism and radicalisation).
- Governors ensure that staff recruited to the school are thoroughly checked. They ensure that all safeguarding procedures and policies are in place and effectively implemented. This includes checking the suitability of staff to work with children before taking up their role in the school. The governor with specific responsibility for safeguarding routinely checks the school's procedures and speaks with pupils regularly to ensure that they feel safe and secure.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Since the school converted to become an academy, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has rapidly improved and is now outstanding. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress from their carefully assessed starting points which prepares them well for the next stage of their education. The school's records confirm that pupils transfer to local mainstream schools, including grammar schools. In addition, pupils go on to gain admission to college and aspire to go to university.
- Teachers build highly effective and trusting relationships with pupils. As a result of precise planning of tasks to meet individual needs, pupils develop the skills and resilience necessary to attempt increasingly challenging work. Consequently, work in books is of a very high quality and confirms that pupils quickly build the skills needed to write in full sentences in a range of genres. Their progress is outstanding.
- Teachers plan tasks that interest pupils and capture their imagination. For example, older pupils played 'connect bingo' and challenged themselves against the clock to improve their fluency and understanding of key number concepts. Younger pupils wrote information texts about topics of interest such as outer space, the white rhino and the Vikings. These topics engage pupils and motivate them to write.
- Teachers are skilled in assessing pupils' work accurately. As a result, they quickly address any misunderstandings and 'step in' during lessons at just the right moment. This approach ensures that pupils develop perseverance and independence but, importantly, does not allow them to develop anxiety which would slow progress.

- The most-able pupils are challenged to deepen their learning. Work in their books demonstrates teachers' high expectations. Questioning is highly effective in encouraging pupils to extend their learning. As a result of effective teaching, pupils catch up rapidly and are working at an appropriate level for their age. This represents outstanding progress from low starting points.
- The school's approach to providing feedback to pupils is highly effective. Pupils know to look for the 'fix-it' box and have another go at improving their work. Teachers routinely encourage them to extend their learning to make even better progress. This approach is also having a positive impact on developing pupils' resilience and positive attitudes to learning.
- Teaching assistants receive high-quality training to enable them to support pupils' learning and personal development. They are highly positive about their role in the school; 'wild horses wouldn't keep me away' was typical of comments received by inspectors. Experienced teaching assistants lead the teaching of communication skills to develop pupils' social, communication and language skills. Precise, highly focused teaching in well-resourced classrooms builds pupils' skills effectively, enabling them to develop positive relationships and empathy with others.
- Pupils love to read in this school. The teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) begins in Year 1. Pupils' knowledge and skills develop quickly as a result of highly effective, precise teaching, often in small groups. Pupils learn to use their knowledge to read and spell unfamiliar words. They are encouraged to read every day and try new authors from their well-resourced library. Consequently, progress in reading is strong for all pupils.
- The school's focus on teaching key skills is successfully embedded in all classes. Reading, writing and mathematics are taught effectively, enabling pupils to achieve in all areas of the curriculum. For example, the pupils' topic books contain many examples of high-quality writing. These books include descriptions of Viking long boats and accounts of a recent visit to Whale Island to support their learning about Darwin.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Although the school's relentless focus on learning is unquestionable, all staff prioritise pupils' personal development to enable them to learn effectively. For example, staff give pupils frequent opportunities to celebrate their achievements and feel proud and successful. This builds the resilience, self-esteem and self-confidence they had lost before joining the school.
- Pupils know and understand the routines in place to support their learning and personal development. The fundamental British values of respect, tolerance and the rule of law are central to the school's ethos and expectations. Planned assemblies deepen pupils' understanding further. For example, pupils reflect on and learn about other cultures such as Buddhism and Hinduism as well as learning about Shrove Tuesday and Easter. Consequently, pupils become tolerant and respectful young people, which prepares them well when they transfer to their next school.
- Pupils take pride in their work and achievements. High-quality presentation is both expected and achieved in all pupils' books. During the Friday celebration assembly, observed during the inspection, pupils demonstrated great pleasure and obvious pride in being presented with achievement awards. They respectfully listened and applauded appropriately, recognising the positive achievements of their peers. Over their time at Longspee Academy, pupils develop positive attitudes to both learning and to respecting the achievements of others.
- Leaders include pupils in the organisation and running of the school. They seek pupils' views through the class school council representative and give them opportunities to vote on their favourite topic to be studied, such as the 'Deep Sea' in Years 7 and 8. As a result, pupils say they 'belong' and feel 'part of a family'. These strategies underpin pupils' improving personal development and their deepening self-belief and sense of self-worth.
- Almost all parents praise the work of the school. 'I cannot fault the amazing work Longspee has done. My child looks forward to school on a daily basis' is typical of comments received by inspectors. Pupils spoke with confidence about how to stay safe on the internet and whom to approach if they felt unsafe or upset. Most are adamant that there is no bullying and recognise and appreciate the safe environment following periods of upset in previous schools.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. From the beginning of their education at Longspee, pupils learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Leaders monitor their behaviour and attendance closely to identify triggers or patterns. Interventions are swiftly put in place. Records confirm that incidents reduce over time and physical restraint is rarely used and then only as a last resort. There have been no exclusions since the school became an academy.
- The school day starts promptly with a short assembly. At this time, leaders clearly re-state their expectations and set out the structure of the day. This reduces pupils' anxieties and supports a very positive start to the day. As a result, attendance is above the national average.
- Break- and lunchtimes are calm and sociable occasions. Pupils move around the school very sensibly and enjoy playing football outside with their friends. Inspectors observed exemplary behaviour during the inspection. The very occasional outbursts of anger were resolved almost instantly as a result of the calm actions of the staff.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very strong. They learn to focus and concentrate in lessons, supported by a well-understood and consistently implemented reward and credit system. Pupils say that they value their education and are achieving significantly better than in their previous school. Parents praise the work of the school, stating that their child's behaviour has been transformed and noticeable improvement has taken place at home.
- Pupils who occasionally access alternative provision benefit from the highly personalised support, commissioned by the local authority. They are supported effectively to re-engage with their learning and develop positive behaviour for learning. This prepares them well for the next stage of their education.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- Pupils' attainment on entry is significantly below that expected for their age. Most have missed large parts of their education. Often, pupils join the school at different times of the year. They display challenging and anxious behaviour and have not developed positive attitudes to learning. Nonetheless, once settled, all pupils make outstanding progress.
- The school's detailed records, including assessments of pupils on entry to the school and work in pupils' books, confirm that pupils make rapid progress from their starting points. This is particularly the case in their key skills and personal development, as a result of highly effective teaching and strong care and support.
- Teachers are skilled in planning tasks, which they break down into small steps of learning. Targets set are challenging and aspirational. Detailed analysis of pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics shows that pupils make at least expected progress and an increasing proportion make better than expected progress when set against these challenging targets set by school leaders.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as their peers as a result of the outstanding provision and relentless focus on their learning and progress. There are no gaps in achievement to close. Pupils make rapid progress in their learning in all year groups and in all subjects.
- Staff routinely and frequently review pupils' progress to check that they are making sufficient progress and that targets are challenging enough. Leaders implement interventions swiftly to reduce identified barriers to learning. As a result, gaps are quickly closed and all groups, including the disadvantaged, girls and the most able, achieve well. Individual pupil case studies, which are of an exceptionally high standard, confirm that the school is proactive in securing the expertise and support of external agencies. In addition, the effectiveness of planned interventions is continually evaluated to ensure that pupils make swift progress.
- Pupils make rapid progress in their key skills of reading, writing and mathematics as a result of intensive, well-planned daily learning activities. Pupils readily accept the challenges set to develop their reading skills and understanding of number. This highly structured approach is having a very positive impact on supporting pupils to make rapid progress in these subjects.
- The most-able pupils make outstanding progress from low starting points. As a result of highly personalised teaching, this group of pupils catches up quickly. Work in books confirms that they reach the standards expected for their age.

School details

Unique reference number	113963
Local authority	Poole
Inspection number	10011161

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	5–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	44
Appropriate authority	The academy committee
Chair	Caroline Macleod
Associate principal	Sharon Burt
Telephone number	01202 380266
Website	www.longspeeacademy.co.uk
Email address	reception@longspeeschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Longspee Academy is a special day school providing education for boys and girls with emotional, social and mental health difficulties. All pupils are supported by a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- Longspee Academy opened in September 2013. The school is part of the Ambitions Academy Trust. When its predecessor school, Longspee School, was last inspected by Ofsted, its overall effectiveness was judged to be good overall.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Longspee Academy provides an outreach service offering behaviour support to mainstream schools in Poole.
- Some pupils join the school at times throughout the year.
- On occasion, the local authority commissions alternative provision for individual pupils, a bespoke service to support the work of the school. This was the case at the time of the inspection for a very small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 14 lessons or parts of lessons, most of which were jointly observed with the associate principal or vice-principal. The inspectors also observed the teaching of phonics.
- The inspectors spoke to pupils throughout the inspection, including at break- and lunchtimes, to determine their views of the school.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work in their books to establish the current quality of their work and progress over time.
- Inspectors listened to groups of pupils from Year 1 to Year 8 read aloud.
- An inspector attended a celebration assembly on the second day of the inspection.
- The inspectors held discussions with the chief education officer, associate principal and all members of the senior leadership team. In addition, inspectors met with middle leaders, teachers and spoke with teaching assistants throughout the inspection.
- The inspectors met with a group of governors, including the chair of the academy committee.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including the school's improvement plans, the management of staff performance, information on pupils' progress, and records relating to behaviour and safety. The lead inspector also looked at minutes from recent academy committee meetings and the school's records of the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment, including a number of individual case studies.
- The inspectors took account of five responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspector spoke with a group of parents during the inspection. In addition, responses to the Parent View free-text service were analysed.
- Questionnaires from 15 members of staff were analysed.

Inspection team

Catherine Leahy, lead inspector
Andrew Penman

Her Majesty's Inspector
Ofsted Inspector

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