



Fred Longworth High School: A Specialist Arts College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 106527
Local authority Wigan
Inspection number 287537
Inspection dates 28 February–1 March 2007
Reporting inspector Jean Kendall HMI

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

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Type of school | Secondary | School address | Printshop Lane |
| School category | Community | | Tyldesley |
| Age range of pupils | 11–16 | | Manchester |
| | | | Lancashire |
| | | | M29 8JN |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01942 883796 |
| Number on roll | 1,303 | Fax number | 01942 897413 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Cllr B Wilson |
| Date of previous school inspection | April 2002 | Headteacher | Mr A Colley |

| | | |
|-----------|--------------------|----------------|
| Age group | Inspection date(s) | Inspection no. |
| 11–16 | 28 Feb–1 Mar 2007 | 287537 |

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005 the school must provide a copy of this report, free of charge or in prescribed cases on payment of such fee as they think fit (not exceeding the cost of supply), to any person who asks for one.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Fred Longworth High School is a popular, larger than average comprehensive. The school is located in the Tyldesley ward on the eastern edge of Wigan. The majority of students are White British with a very small number from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below average, although students are from a range of socio economic backgrounds with some from very disadvantaged areas. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average and provision is also made for above average numbers of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school is oversubscribed and the population is stable, with very few students entering after Year 7 or leaving before taking their GCSEs.

The school has been an Arts College since 1997, initially with a performance arts specialism and including the visual arts in 2003. It became a Leading Edge School in 2003, focusing on practitioner research in music teaching, using information and communication technology (ICT) to improve teaching, and raising boys' achievement. In 2004 it became an Enterprise Pathfinder School. The school has Artsmark Gold and Sportsmark Gold status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Fred Longworth High School provides a good standard of education and many elements of the school's work are outstanding. The headteacher and senior leadership team have a clear vision for the school and together with the staff, they set high expectations for the students. Rigorous self-evaluation gives all staff a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors know and support the school well, constructively challenging senior and middle managers. The school's capacity to make further improvement is excellent due to outstanding leadership at all levels and its ability to take effective action to tackle under performance. This is illustrated by the excellent work that the school has undertaken to raise the achievement of boys and improve their motivation. The majority of parents are highly supportive of the school and pleased with the quality of education provided.

Students' personal development is outstanding and this makes a significant contribution to the progress they make. Outstanding care, advice and support help students to achieve well. Teaching and learning are mostly good and about a quarter are outstanding. There is some less effective, although satisfactory teaching, where students do not have sufficient opportunity to develop their ideas. The use of homework to enhance standards is not being developed consistently in all subjects. The preponderance of good teaching enables the majority of students to make good progress and achieve above average standards. Students do not achieve as well in English at Key Stage 3 but actions taken to improve performance are beginning to have a positive impact. Students make good progress in most subjects in Years 10 and 11 and achieve above average standards at GCSE.

The curriculum is outstanding and is enhanced by initiatives through the specialist arts status. This has had a positive impact on attainment and motivation, not only in the arts but across the curriculum. Students particularly enjoy the opportunities to be creative and develop self-confidence as a result. Community partnerships are very well developed and the school's relations with primary schools and the support given to students at points of transition are excellent. The school gives excellent value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in English at Key Stage 3.
- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching and ensure consistency of approach to homework.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. On entry to the school, girls' attainment is generally higher than that of boys. The school has introduced very effective measures to raise boys' attainment and by the time students take their GCSEs boys do equally as well as girls to achieve above average standards. The percentage of students attaining five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics is above the national average. Students also do particularly well in humanities, science, design and technology, and music although performance was weaker in ICT and art in 2006. Actions to improve subjects where performance has been weaker, for example in French and German, have been effective and have brought about improved standards in 2006.

Standards at Key Stage 3 are above average in mathematics and science and students make good progress in these subjects. Students have not attained such high standards in English at Key Stage 3. Early identification of underachievement and teaching matched more closely to learning needs is beginning to improve standards but initiatives have not yet had an impact on test results. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well provided for and make very good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade 1

Students' personal development is outstanding and this makes a significant contribution to the progress they make. Students really enjoy school; their behaviour and attendance are good and most have a mature and confident approach to learning. Students particularly enjoy the opportunities offered through the specialist arts college status, which enable them to be creative and develop self-confidence. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Students have excellent opportunities to debate controversial issues, develop their views and express opinions and feelings. They have positive experiences of ethnic and religious diversity and show respect for the traditions of other cultures.

Students feel safe and free from bullying and know who to approach should they need advice. A group of students meet regularly to make sure that the school maintains its very good support mechanisms. The school has outstanding links with the police and students say that they feel particularly safe as a result of an officer being around school almost every day. Students' contribution to the community is outstanding. They are keen to take responsibility as peer mentors, buddies, duty monitors and as members of the very effective school council and the 'Every Child Matters' group. Community relations flourish due to students' desire to support their local community and become involved in communal activities such as community bands and drama

productions. Students are adopting healthy lifestyles, as indicated by the growing queues for healthy food options and a high level of participation in sporting activities. They are prepared very well for later life through good careers guidance and a range of excellent opportunities to develop enterprise and key skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The overall quality of teaching is good and a significant proportion is outstanding. The school energetically promotes the development of teaching and learning styles and robust arrangements are used effectively to monitor teaching and learning. Evaluation leads to the sharing of good practice and this is having a positive impact on lessons. For example, the sharing of lesson objectives with students and the focus on using assessment to support learning are heightening their involvement with what is required. Students enjoy their lessons and the mutual respect between teachers and students enables learning to take place in a harmonious atmosphere. As a result, students make good progress and achieve well. Lessons are thoroughly planned and teachers have very good subject expertise. In outstanding lessons teachers radiate enthusiasm for the subject and their expertise is reflected in the use of a wide variety of approaches. In less effective, though satisfactory, lessons the teacher does not give students enough opportunities to be actively involved in the development of ideas and the rate of progress is not sufficiently challenging, particularly for the more able.

The regular tracking and assessing of students' achievement are strong features of guidance and support. Students are aware of their targets, how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. However, the use of homework to enhance standards is not being used consistently.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. Statutory requirements are enhanced by specialist arts subjects and several work-related and vocational courses. The courses add breadth and variety to the curriculum and provide excellent choice to meet individual needs, interests and aptitudes as well as preparing students for their future economic well-being. Work-related skills are effectively developed through a focus on key skills at Key Stage 3 and are further developed through the enterprise curriculum at Key Stage 4. There is very good additional support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. More able students have good opportunities to extend their knowledge and skills

through able and talented programmes, early entry to GCSE in French and music and the opportunity to study AS level courses.

Links with partner primary schools are excellent and students are very well supported to make continuous progress. Extensive partnerships with other secondary schools and colleges and industrial links with large companies broaden the opportunities available to students. Many students take up the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer which greatly enhance their academic, social and cultural development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Outstanding care, advice and support help students to achieve well. Students receive excellent support on entry to the school and very good guidance in course and career choices. Parents and students are well informed about standards achieved in all subjects. Students know what they need to do to improve their work and parents receive good guidance on how to help and support them. Students are very appreciative of the additional support provided by teachers in subjects where they experience difficulties.

There is very effective pastoral care and support for all students, and particularly for vulnerable students. Problems are identified early and appropriate measures are taken to support students. Learning mentors and teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to the school's work. They provide effective support to students experiencing difficulty and help them to make very good progress. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are outstanding and all staff are aware of procedures which are regularly reviewed. The school has many extensively trained staff to administer first aid and also encourages all Year 11 students to gain a first aid qualification.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management at all levels are outstanding. The headteacher, supported by a highly effective leadership team, has a clear vision for the school and sets high expectations for staff and students. The school's self-evaluation report demonstrates that this is a school that knows its strengths and weaknesses and, in pursuit of raising standards, is occasionally harsh in judging itself. Views of parents, pupils and other stakeholders are sought and acted on.

Middle managers have the opportunity to influence policy and lead initiatives; an example being the formation of a working group to improve the use of homework, being led by a year head. Delegated responsibilities ensure excellent professional development opportunities exist for all colleagues. The

revised structure has a clear focus on teaching and learning, with advanced skills teachers playing a major role in the dissemination of good practice.

The day-to-day work of the school and the success of students of all abilities confirm its strong commitment to equality of opportunity. The senior team's analysis of performance data is robust and leads to detailed action planning at all levels. Middle managers evaluate performance of departments via direct observations of lessons and sampling of pupils' work. Self evaluation at departmental level is good overall. There are rigorous processes in place although impact on standards is not yet consistent across the whole school. There is outstanding practice in some departments which has brought about improved results and provides a model for further development.

Financial planning is outstanding and the school benefits from having a much appreciated business manager. At whole-school and department level planning is fully costed and accommodated within the budget. The school identifies and successfully bids for additional funding that have brought significant improvements in resources. The benefits from having arts college status are considerable and recognised by students and staff across all subject areas.

Governors know and support the school extremely well, constructively challenging senior and middle managers. They have worked with the school leadership group to successfully address issues identified in the previous inspection. The leadership of the school clearly has outstanding capacity and determination to bring about further improvements.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate. | School Overall |
|---|-----------------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | |
|--|------------|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 1 |
| The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage | NA |
| The effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision | NA |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 1 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |

Achievement and standards

| | |
|--|----------|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The <i>standards</i> ¹ reached by learners | 2 |
| How well learners make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 2 |

Personal development and well-being

| | |
|---|----------|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 1 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 1 |

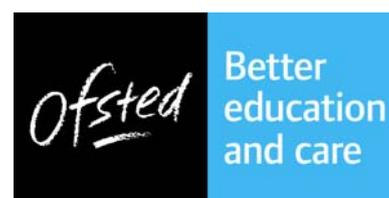
¹ Grade 1 – Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 – Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 – Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 – Exceptionally low.

The quality of provision

| | |
|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs? | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 1 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 |

Leadership and management

| | |
|--|-----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 1 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money | 1 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 1 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |



Fred Longworth High School
Printshop Lane
Tyldesley
Manchester
Lancashire
M29 8JN

1 March 2007

Dear Students

Thank you for making us so welcome at your school and for giving us your views on what it is like to be a student at Fred Longworth High. It was a real pleasure to spend time with you and your teachers. We were very impressed by the mature and confident attitude you have towards your learning and by the way you support one another. You told us that you enjoy school and want to do well and this is an important factor in the good progress you make. It is obvious that you are proud of your school and of your achievements and you are right to be so. Your school offers a good standard of education and we found many elements of the school's work to be outstanding. The Specialist Arts College facilities are excellent and clearly add to your enjoyment, achievement and confidence.

You told us that you feel well cared for and your teachers provide excellent support and guidance to help you achieve your best. We agree and think you also make an excellent contribution to your school and the local community. We loved hearing about your production of 'Brassed Off!' and wish we had been there to see it.

Your school is well led and everyone is committed to providing the very best education for you. We found that your teachers work very hard to provide interesting activities to meet your needs and interests. Most of the teaching is good and a significant amount is outstanding. In a few lessons, you did not have enough opportunity to develop your ideas and understanding. We have asked teachers to look more closely at how they plan lessons and provide opportunities for you to study independently, so that all teaching enables you to achieve highly.

We wish you all the very best for the future and hope you go on to fulfil your aspirations.

Yours sincerely

Jean Kendall HMI
On behalf of the inspection team