

Fred Longworth High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106527
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	336688
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Peter Cox

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,281
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Wilson
Headteacher	Janet Garretts
Date of previous school inspection	February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. They observed 38 teachers and 38 part lessons during which time a scrutiny of students' work was made. Meetings were held with students representing all year groups, staff including a key support worker and those with a range of whole-school responsibilities, governors and the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors analysed a range of school documents including policies on health and safety, child protection including safeguarding, the school improvement plan, governing body meeting minutes, self-evaluation records and a sample of subject plans and policies. Inspectors analysed the questionnaire responses of 276 parents and carers, 16 staff and 711 students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- whether the journey of improvement over recent years is being sustained given that the schools performance in 2008 was less strong
- how successful the school is at closing the gap of attainment between those students believed to be entitled to free school meals and the progress of girls, given that boys have been doing better overall
- the extent to which the quality of teaching and students' personal development contributes to their outcomes
- how well the new senior leaders are being supported by the school.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average sized school that is popular and oversubscribed. There are similar numbers of boys and girls and the proportion of those believed to be entitled to a free school meal is less than that seen nationally. Almost all students are of White British heritage. The proportion of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. The school has appointed a new headteacher from outside the school and five other senior leaders, some promoted from within, over the last 18 months.

The school has two specialisms, Arts since 1997 and Applied Learning since 2008 having been recognised as a High Performing Specialist School. Other awards include Artsmark Gold and Sportsmark.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. Students appreciate the work that teachers and other adults do for them and show this through their high attendance and excellent behaviour. Their determination to learn is palpable and significantly contributes to an orderly, safe and welcoming environment where respect for each other and adults, including visitors is impressive. Students' personal development makes an outstanding contribution to their excellent learning and progress.

The school has not rested on its laurels since the last inspection and has made sure the improvements required have been made. Teaching has improved and helps ensure students achieve the high expectations of them. Indeed, all groups of students achieve well. However, teachers' assessment of students learning, while good, can be developed further to help secure improved attainment across the ability range. The school sets challenging targets which are consistently met and often exceeded. The comparatively lower performance in some areas in 2008 has been overcome through swift corrective action. In 2009, the school demonstrated a 'return to form' recording overall levels of attainment to be above average and learning and progress, outstanding. The school's accurate and reliable monitoring data show this trend to be continuing.

The reshaped leadership team under the direction of a skilled and energetic headteacher, together with the impressive support from an experienced and highly effective governing body, are demonstrating good capacity to improve. Processes for managing the performance of teachers are in place and well structured. The school understands its strengths and comparative weaknesses because it is constantly in pursuit of excellence and holds everything up to the light for scrutiny. For example, the curriculum, while good in its current form, has been redesigned to match even more closely, from the beginning of next year, the needs and abilities of all students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop assessment further to support learning and improve attainment by:
 - ensuring teachers' planning is more sharply focused and caters for the full range of ability represented in all classes.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

The relationship between students and their teachers is a major contribution to students securing outstanding learning and progress. Students come to school wanting to learn, their high levels of attendance and punctuality and their exemplary behaviour allow teachers to do their jobs very well. Lessons are friendly yet purposeful with students often displaying high levels of engagement and enjoyment leading to their outstanding achievement. They speak proudly of their time at school and described it as one 'big family'. They believe all teachers to be inspiring and there to help them get the most from their education. Many students take literally the school motto 'deeds not words' and were often seen helping one another in lessons.

Students arrive in Year 7 with attainment that is broadly average yet with some pockets of low literacy levels, particularly among girls. They leave having made outstanding progress overall and securing above average attainment. This helps almost all of them move onto further education, employment or training. The school is addressing the issues in literacy and is developing independent learning across the school with success. The reshaped curriculum on offer from next year has been designed to improve outcomes even further. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress in line with their peers, although those with a statement of special educational need perform even better as a result of the close personal attention provided. Progress of boys at the lower and middle ability range has been better than that of their female counterparts. The school has been very successful in promoting within the community the benefits of full engagement in learning. The school's specialisms have impacted very positively on students' achievement by involving them in a range of innovative arts projects and vocational courses within the school community and beyond.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The large majority of teaching is good and much is outstanding with none that is inadequate. Lessons provide students with varied and challenging activities resulting in high levels of engagement. Teachers' subject knowledge is a strength. They set high expectations and their excellent use of time ensures a rapid pace of learning and enjoyment. Planning is clear and effective, although it does not always cater for the range of abilities within a class. Assessment procedures to support learning are evident but not always finely tuned enough to help raise attainment particularly for those who are ready to move on independently.

The curriculum is wide and varied and includes extensive activities outside normal hours for which there is a high take-up by students. Students speak well of the varied subjects provided within the specialisms. Alternative courses in partnership with others help engage those students who are better suited to more vocational subjects. The curriculum provides many learning opportunities and supports the aspirations and interests of students well. However, it is acknowledged by the school that much learning is done beyond the school day because of the way the curriculum is currently structured. The new curriculum is designed to offer more flexibility.

Outstanding care, guidance and support helps those new to the school settle quickly. There are highly effective transition arrangements with additional support for those who may experience some anxiety. Students throughout the school speak highly of the support they receive. Those more vulnerable students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive targeted support that is outstanding. This helps such individuals and their parents, aided by numerous external agencies, to overcome their difficulties and achieve success.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team contains a well balanced mix of those new to the school and those promoted from within. Continuity of the previously outstanding middle leadership has been maintained and the recent arrival of the new headteacher and other senior leaders has complemented the team exceptionally well. This has been secured under the strategic oversight of a highly effective governing body. Morale of staff and students is high because leaders and managers successfully communicate high aspirations for the school. Equal opportunities are promoted well. For example, through the rigorous monitoring of student progress, the gap between girls' and boys' achievement and that of those students believed to be entitled to a free school meal is closing rapidly. Leaders are taking very effective action to ensure the high

quality teaching is maintained by developing the cycle of lesson observations and evaluating learning more frequently. Safeguarding procedures are outstanding. Meticulous records are kept and policies regularly updated. Staff at all levels have a comprehensive understanding of child protection issues and the school is considered a leader of high quality safeguarding practice and an example to others. The schools promotion of community cohesion is good; plans are effective and promote engagement with and understanding of a wide range of religious groups and those from different backgrounds. Some developments are quite recent and it is too early to evaluate their full impact.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

A small minority of parents and carers returned completed questionnaires. Of those, almost all said their children were happy at school. A few parents and carers felt the school did not help their children to have a healthy lifestyle. However, inspection evidence does not concur with this. It shows the school doing much to promote students adopting a healthy lifestyle. A few parents and carers made written comments about their perception of the school not involving them in their children's education or being fully informed about the progress their children are making. Inspectors found no evidence to support this view. The inspectors' response to their concerns is reflected, where appropriate, in judgements made in the relevant sections of the report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Fred Longworth High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 276 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,281 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	99	36	167	61	9	3	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	108	39	164	59	3	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	102	37	157	57	16	6	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	113	41	157	57	5	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	116	42	150	54	8	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	85	31	164	59	23	8	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	66	24	173	63	29	11	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	96	35	163	59	10	4	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	100	36	158	57	10	4	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	107	39	152	55	12	4	1	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	71	26	162	59	19	7	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	93	34	172	62	7	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	134	49	132	48	4	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.

Progress:

the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 May 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Fred Longworth High School, Manchester, M29 8JN

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to my colleagues and me when we inspected your school recently. We were hugely impressed by the way you behave in lessons and around the school, your levels of attendance and your very mature attitude to learning. It was clear that you take much pride in your school and are determined to make the most of your time there. Those of you we spoke to during our meetings and in lessons expressed your appreciation of the high quality teaching you receive and the 'extra mile' that the teachers go to get the very best from you.

The inspection team consider your school to be outstanding. It provides you with an exceptionally high standard of education. Teachers, managers and leaders have worked very hard to achieve this and yet could not have done this without your help and support.

As a team we identified one area for improvement. In lessons, you learn a great deal and often make outstanding progress. However, we think that your teachers should develop further the ways they plan, deliver and monitor your learning. By doing this they will provide for the range of abilities within each class. This would help those of you who can grasp things more quickly move ahead at your own pace and perhaps reach higher standards of attainment.

Please continue to support your school in the way that you do. It is heartening to see a school that helps its students develop into mature young people who will undoubtedly continue to make a positive contribution to their community and further afield..

Congratulations!

Yours sincerely

Peter Cox
Lead inspector

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