

Inspection of Longdon Hall School

Longdon Hall School, Longdon Green, Nr Lichfield, Staffordshire WS15 4PT

Inspection dates: 16 to 18 September 2025

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Sixth-form provision	Insufficient evidence
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school that knows its pupils very well. Many pupils have previously missed a significant amount of time from school. Through an integrated approach to clinical, pastoral and educational support, each pupil is helped to develop academically and socially. Pupils understand that the school has high expectations of their behaviour. They value how staff help them to manage themselves and their emotions. They develop a more positive attitude to their education.

The school is ambitious for all pupils. Pupils benefit from highly personalised curriculum pathways. They enjoy lessons in a broad range of subjects, including esports and outdoor education. Many achieve a good range of qualifications. This supports pupils to achieve their next steps in education and future career ambitions. Some pupils believe that this would not have been possible if they had not moved to Longdon Hall.

Pupils enjoy the activities on offer to them on Friday afternoons, for example bowling, swimming and film club. They know the importance of respecting others. Most reflect this in the way that they adapt their language and behaviour in different contexts, for example, when in the local community. They learn about important topics such as healthy relationships and staying safe online.

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

The school has made improvements to its curriculum since the previous inspection. There is a broad and ambitious curriculum in place, with some new subjects and qualifications on offer. The combination of personal, social and health education (PSHE) and 'life skills' lessons prepare pupils well for adulthood and life beyond school. They understand what it means to live in modern British society. Older pupils receive careers guidance and information to support their next steps. Most pupils get the information and experience they need to know what careers they want to pursue in the future, but this is not consistently the case. The school is currently updating its careers education programme to strengthen this offer.

The school ensures that staff have the expertise to teach the curriculum. It has set out clearly what needs to be taught and when. Teaching presents new information

clearly. However, some of the checks on pupils' understanding do not identify how well pupils have learned key content. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. They are asked to take on learning activities before they are ready. Others, who have a secure understanding, are not moved on when they could complete more complex, independent activity. This means that some pupils do not learn the curriculum as well, or in the depth they could.

The school assesses the needs of the weakest readers and puts appropriate support in place for them. However, some pupils have gaps in their reading and writing skills, which can be a barrier to their learning or to their confidence as learners. The school has not ensured that staff have a precise understanding of the literacy gaps that these pupils have. As a result, these gaps are not addressed quickly enough.

All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Each pupil's needs are carefully assessed and useful shorter-term targets set by staff. Targets and strategies to support each pupil's social, emotional and mental health needs are well understood and followed by staff. However, there is some variation in how well staff ensure that pupils learn as well as they could.

Positive relationships are at the centre of the school community. When pupils make the wrong behaviour choices, staff help them to reflect on what happened and to understand how they can do better next time. Pupils and staff talk about how this approach, which was introduced last year, has meant that behaviour around the school and in lessons has improved. The school's work to improve attendance is also making a difference and absence levels are reducing, especially for those pupils who have been persistently absent from school in the past.

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets its statutory responsibilities, all of the independent school standards, and schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. It also benefits from a leadership and governance structure that work in synergy to support school improvement. The proprietor has created capacity around key areas, including recruitment, premises management and health and safety. This enables leaders to focus on pupils' education and development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- ✓ The school does not have an accurate understanding of the gaps that exist in some pupils' foundational knowledge in reading and writing. Staff do not have clear information about these gaps and how to address them. This inhibits some pupils' ability to read and write fluently and accurately. For some, this impacts on their confidence as learners. The school should ensure that there is an effective system to identify and address these key knowledge gaps quickly.
- ✓ Some of the checks on pupils' understanding do not accurately identify how well pupils have learned new content. This means that adaptations to teaching are not always effective, and some pupils' learning is hindered. They do not learn the curriculum as well or in the depth they could. The school should ensure that adaptations are responsive to the needs of individual pupils at that point in their learning.
- ✓ The school has not ensured that its careers education programme provides pupils with information on a broad range of careers. Not all pupils develop an understanding of the range of careers that they may wish to pursue. Some do not gain an appropriate understanding of what life in the workplace entails. The

school should ensure that its planned work on developing its careers education provision supports all pupils in gaining a deeper understanding of what they can aspire to in the future.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	137098
DfE registration number	860/6037
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10391760
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	7 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	77
Number of part-time pupils	9
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	Simon Smith (Executive headteacher)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£59,698 to £89,698
Telephone number	01543 491051
Website	www.longdonhallschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@longdonhallschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 to 10 November 2022

Information about this school

- ✓ Longdon Hall School provides education for up to 84 boys and girls aged 7 to 18 years, all of whom have an EHC plan. The school offers provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Some pupils also have a diagnosis of

autism spectrum condition with associated learning difficulties. Many pupils have missed a substantial amount of schooling before they join the school.

- ✓ The school also operates an off-site unit, The Ferns, which provides bespoke provision for a small number of pupils. It is located at Fern House, Brereton Hill Lane, Brereton Cross, Rugeley WS15 1PY.
- ✓ Places are commissioned by nine local authorities.
- ✓ At the time of the inspection, there was one student attending the sixth-form provision.
- ✓ The school makes limited use of three unregistered providers of alternative provision.
- ✓ A small number of pupils also attend another school in the organisation on a parttime basis to follow different vocational qualifications.
- ✓ There have been changes to the senior leadership team since the previous inspection. The head of school took up the post in December 2024. The executive headteacher started in role in March 2025.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- ✓ Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- ✓ As part of their work to check compliance with the independent school standards, inspectors met with the executive headteacher, head of school, other school leaders, the proprietor representative and the chair of the governing board.
- ✓ Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, including early reading, geography and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- ✓ To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- ✓ Inspectors considered pupils' behaviour throughout the inspection. Inspectors also spoke with leaders to consider how they support pupils' behaviour.
- ✓ Inspectors carried out a detailed tour of the sites and premises to consider whether the school meets the independent school standards. Inspectors considered documents, policies and plans linked to the health, safety and welfare of pupils, including the fire risk assessment, checks on fire safety equipment and site safety.
- ✓ Inspectors talked with pupils and staff to gather general information about school life. They considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments.
- ✓ A range of documentation was scrutinised, including school policies, curriculum documents and the school's website.

Inspection team

Nicola Beech, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tony Bradshaw

His Majesty's Inspector

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