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Rachelle Otulakowski
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Dear Mrs Otulakowski

Monitoring inspection of a school not in a category of concern of Longhill High School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 17 September 2025, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and took place because the school meets the monitoring threshold as set out in the [Monitoring Inspection Handbook](#).

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's key and (where applicable) provision judgements, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, Lascelles Houghton, His Majesty's Inspector (HMI), Simon Graydon, His Majesty's Inspector (HMI) and I discussed with you and other senior leaders, the chair of governors, a representative of the local authority and a school improvement partner brokered by the local authority the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, met with pupils and staff and reviewed a range of documentation. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but some aspects of the school need further improvement.

The school should take further action to:

- Improve the knowledge and expertise of those responsible for maintaining the single central record.

Main findings

Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in the school's staffing and leadership, including a structural reorganisation. As a result, clearer lines of responsibility and accountability have been established. Guidance from school improvement partners, brokered by the local authority, has helped ensure that the actions taken to improve the school are designed to be sustainable. Staff now benefit from a well-structured support programme that enables them to meet the school's expectations.

The school has made notable improvements in the quality of education since the previous inspection. A curriculum review has been completed to ensure that pupils study a broad range of subjects. Subjects are taught by teachers with appropriate expertise. Staff are guided by current educational research to improve their teaching practice. Lessons typically follow a consistent structure, helping pupils know what to expect. Pupils regularly begin lessons with tasks that reinforce prior learning. Where teaching is strongest, teachers frequently check for gaps in pupils' understanding and adjust their instruction to address misconceptions. As a result, the quality and quantity of pupils' work is steadily improving.

However, inconsistencies remain in how teachers support pupils' learning effectively. At times, learning is not well matched to pupils' needs. Sometimes, checks on understanding do not assess effectively how well all pupils are progressing through the curriculum. Consequently, sometimes lessons move on before pupils have grasped new concepts. This limits the depth and breadth of knowledge they learn. Leaders are aware of these issues and are providing targeted support to improve teaching consistency.

Teachers receive clear guidance on strategies for supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff can articulate these expectations confidently. However, some staff do not apply this knowledge effectively in the classroom. Consequently, some pupils with SEND do not receive the support they need to access learning successfully.

Behaviour across the school is improving. The behaviour policy has been revised to promote a culture of high expectations. Staff have received helpful guidance on implementing the policy and are increasingly consistent in enforcing the school's rules. Classrooms are generally calm and orderly, reducing disruptions and allowing pupils to focus on their work. Pupils spoke positively to inspectors about the rapid improvements in behaviour around the school.

Although the number of suspensions and exclusions remains high, the number of pupils who are suspended repeatedly is decreasing. More pupils at risk of repeat suspension are receiving targeted support to help them manage their behaviour effectively.

Overall attendance remains significantly below the national average. Too many pupils continue to miss substantial portions of their education. The school's policy and procedures are not precise enough about when and how the school will respond when pupils' attendance becomes a concern. The strategies the school uses to try to improve attendance are often not tailored well enough to remove the barriers that individual pupils face. However, where a more individualised approach is used, for example for the most severely absent pupils, their attendance is starting to improve. In addition, prompt arrival to lessons has improved considerably, allowing pupils to make better use of learning time and enhance their achievement.

Pupils continue to benefit from a wide range of enrichment opportunities that support their interests and aspirations. The school has worked with external advisers to review and enhance the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. A focus on staff training has ensured that the programme is delivered with greater consistency. However, as the revised curriculum is still in its early stages, many pupils have yet to benefit fully. Consequently, some remain less well informed about topics that prepare them for life in modern Britain.

The school maintains a strong safeguarding culture. However, minor weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements need to be addressed. Administrative errors and gaps in the single central record (SCR) had not been spotted or addressed. These were corrected during the monitoring visit. The SCR now accurately reflects that all required recruitment checks are completed before adults begin working with pupils. The school is in the process of implementing additional training and clearer processes to prevent future errors.

Governors are committed to ensuring that the school delivers high-quality education. The local authority has established a school improvement strategy board to regularly review the work of governors and school leaders. There is a shared understanding of the school's improvement priorities and leaders have engaged openly with external support to evaluate progress. However, the school recognises the need to adopt a more rigorous approach to planning, monitoring and evaluating school improvement.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of governors, the chair of the school improvement strategy board, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Brighton and Hove local authority. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Payne
His Majesty's Inspector