

Lawnswood School

Ring Road, West Park, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS16 5AG

Inspection dates 8–9 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The ambition and total commitment of the headteacher has raised the expectations of students and staff. This has resulted in significant improvements in the quality of teaching so that the school and inspectors judge more than three-quarters of teaching is now good or better.
- Students' achievement is now good overall, especially in the sixth form, where students make strong progress from relatively low starting points and achieve above the national average. All aspects of provision in the sixth form are at least good and some are outstanding.
- The school provides very good care and support for all students, particularly for those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. A range of effective strategies enable all students to feel safe and fully included in the life of the school. Care, guidance and support for students in the sixth form is particularly strong
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is calm and orderly. Students appreciate the recent improvements and are keen to enjoy these better learning opportunities.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are pockets of underachievement in some subject areas. Not enough students are exceeding the expected progress in English and mathematics.
- Some whole-school strategies designed to further improve the quality of teaching are not yet fully in place, for example, those aimed to develop numeracy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 40 lessons in 15 different subject areas and across three key stages. Five of the lessons seen were joint observations with the school’s senior leaders.
- Inspectors listened to students read and evaluated the quality of students’ work in lessons. Inspectors visited different parts of the school site, including the school library and the Careers Fair that was being held at the school. Inspectors saw staff delivering sessions to develop and improve student’s literacy skills.
- Inspectors held meetings with middle and senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors spoke to four different groups of students.
- Inspectors considered the views of 34 parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). They analysed the 47 responses received to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors analysed the school’s published examination results. They looked at the school’s data on students’ progress, lesson plans, minutes of meetings of and reports made to the governing body. They scrutinised information on students’ attendance and behaviour. They also reviewed the school’s self-evaluation and plans for improvement and documents relating to child protection and safeguarding arrangements.
- The inspectors considered the school’s arrangements for making best use of the pupil premium funding.

Inspection team

Helen Storey, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Michael Maddison	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Janet Pruchniewicz	Additional Inspector
Colin Scott	Additional Inspector
Pamela Hemphill	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school. There are more boys on roll than girls. There are 190 students in the sixth form.
- Since the previous full inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed and the leadership team restructured.
- The school has many more students from minority ethnic groups and for whom English is an additional language than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is above the national average, the number of students with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, those whose parents are in the armed forces and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Five Year 11 students attend off-site provision at Leeds College as part of their vocational programme, courses are provided in hospitality and construction.
- The school collaborates with Ralph Thoresby School in order to extend the range of subjects available for sixth form students to study.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure good achievement is sustained over time for all groups of students and in all subjects by:
 - eradicating weaker teaching in some subjects at Key Stage 4, for example, in religious studies and design technology
 - ensuring interventions in English and mathematics are precisely targeted so that every student makes at least expected progress and more students exceed expected progress.
- Further improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that equal attention is given to developing students' literacy and numeracy skills and by providing regular opportunities for students to think about what they are learning.
- Clarify the permanent roles and responsibilities of senior leaders, so that they are sharply focussed on further raising achievement and improving students' progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the school with levels of attainment similar to the national average. The proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE passes at grade C or above, including English and mathematics, has improved over time and the overall achievement of students, as measured by their capped points score, is now above the national average. Students making and exceeding the expected progress in English and mathematics was above the national average in 2012.
- Attainment on entry to the sixth form is below the national average. However, students make progress that exceeds the national average and learner aims, success rates and retention rates all compare favourably with the national and local averages. There is a strong trend of improvement over a three year period
- The achievement of students following vocational programmes is rising consistently.
- Pupils receive good support to improve their reading and this is having an impact on their reading ages and their motivation to read more widely. Additional government funding is being used to support a range of specific interventions for Year 7 students.
- Some students are entered for GCSE mathematics in the summer of Year 10, this does not prevent students reaching their best possible grade and the school ensures that students, including the most able, have the opportunity to achieve at the highest level.
- Inspectors saw evidence of good achievement in most lessons, students' acquired knowledge and understanding quickly. They are keen to learn independently and make good progress when given this opportunity.
- Students who attract pupil premium funding achieve well overall, their attainment as measured by their average points score is in line with their peers. There is still a gap between the progress of these students who begin secondary school with lower or average starting points in English and mathematics and that of their peers and this remains a priority for the school.
- More able students made progress above the national average in English and mathematics in 2012. The number of A* and A grade passes at GCSE that students eligible for the pupil premium funding achieve has increased markedly.
- Students with disabilities or special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve well because of the excellent tailored support they receive. Expected progress in English and mathematics for students with disabilities or special educational needs equalled that of other students in Key Stage 3. Passes at GCSE (Grades A*-G) including English and mathematics for these students have steadily increased over three years.
- Achievement is not outstanding because all students do not yet achieve highly enough in all subjects, for example, in religious studies and design technology at Key Stage 4. For some students their progress is still not good enough in English and mathematics. Senior leaders acknowledge this and have put plans in place to rectify these weaknesses, but it is too soon to judge their impact.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good and outstanding teaching was observed in every key stage within the school. This promoted effective learning, positive relationships and allowed students to make a strong contribution to their own learning and progress.
- In the very best lessons, teachers used their good subject knowledge to set work at the right level for students in their classes and extend students' understanding of their work. In these lessons, all students made good, and some made outstanding, progress.
- This good planning, teaching and assessment is being shared with all teachers to eradicate underachievement in students' performance, for example, recent work filming lessons has been shared for professional development purposes. The proportion of good and outstanding teaching

has risen steadily over time according to the schools' accurate and detailed records.

- Teaching in the sixth form is consistently strong and no teaching was observed that was less than good. This good teaching enabled students to learn independently and take responsibility for their own progress.
- A minority of teaching in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 still requires improvement because it is not yet consistently good enough to eliminate the remaining pockets of underachievement. In lessons where teaching requires improvement, teachers do not plan well enough so that work set is at the right level. As a result, lessons do not fully challenge all students so that they are able to achieve the grades of which they are capable. In these weaker lessons, students are given insufficient time to work independently and think about what they are learning.
- Marking is thorough and helps students understand what they need to do next to improve their work. Target grades are well understood by students and consistently referred to in teachers' written and verbal feedback. The summary feedback sheet, which is used across the school, requires students to respond to additional tasks set by teachers, on occasion these additional tasks are not always systematically followed up and opportunities to strengthen students' learning are sometimes missed.
- Students' literacy skills are being developed well through a wide range of approaches. Students' reading ages are improving and they are able to access subjects across the curriculum. Opportunities to develop students' speaking and listening skills so that they can explain their ideas in more formal ways are not always fully exploited.
- Work to develop students' numeracy skills in all their subjects is at a very early stage.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Around school, in corridors and outside, behaviour is generally calm and well ordered. Students are courteous and polite to each other and to staff. There are some occasional instances of inconsiderate behaviour. Year 7 students appreciate their own outside social space which helps them to settle more quickly into the larger secondary school environment.
- Behaviour in lessons is good and low-level disruption to learning is rare. Attitudes to learning are very positive and in the best lessons students collaborate effectively to support each other's learning. There are well understood and strong systems to manage behaviour in place. Students comment positively on the improvements that have been made since the new headteacher arrived.
- Attendance has improved from previous low levels that were well below the national average. In the current year attendance is 96.2%, at the same point last year it was 93.3%. Attendance of Year 11 students has increased by seven percentage points over the past four years. Persistent absence has been a particular focus and this has fallen to three percent as a result of the very effective 'Panel Meetings' the school has put in place.
- Very few students are excluded from the school, either permanently or for a fixed term. In both cases, these numbers are well below national averages. This academic year there have been no permanent exclusions and only one fixed-term exclusion.
- The views of parents, students and staff are almost universally positive. They recognise the recent improvements in behaviour and are proud to be associated with the school. Students are good ambassadors for the school in the local community.
- Students say they feel safe at school and parents share this view. Students understand what bullying is and the different forms it takes, including prejudice based and cyber bullying. They are confident to approach staff if bullying does occur and they know that they will deal with any problems.
- The school ensures that students feel confident to take the next step in their education. It has good relationships with a number of primary schools and pupils are well prepared for secondary education through visits and other activities. There is careful preparation for intending sixth form students who are individually supported to select appropriate courses. This contributes to good retention and high levels of achievement.

- A strength of the school is the support it provides for potentially vulnerable students, for example, those for whom English is an additional language and those who have disabilities or special educational needs. A team of staff work together to ensure the right support is in place for each student and this is carefully monitored. There has been training for all teachers to ensure that work in lessons is well matched to students' needs.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and governors have brought about significant improvement in the school since the last inspection. These improvements, spearheaded by the headteacher, are highly visible and recognised by staff, students and parents. Students state that they are proud to attend the school and welcome the increased opportunities for learning they now enjoy.
- Senior leaders have communicated clear priorities to improve students' behaviour and the quality of teaching to all staff. They have consistently implemented effective systems to ensure improvement has taken place. There is now scope to clarify and make permanent the roles of senior leaders across the school so that there is a precise focus on further driving up achievement in weaker subject areas and improving students' progress in English and mathematics.
- The leadership of the sixth form effectively supports the progression of students from Year 11 into the sixth form and from Year 13 into higher education, training and employment. Extensive, impartial guidance is available to students and a wide range of external partnerships support students to make appropriate choices for their next stage of development.
- Middle leaders feel empowered to drive improvement in their subject areas and understand that they are held to account through robust quality assurance processes. Although the quality of middle leadership is not yet securely good in every subject, senior leaders are taking clear action to address the shortfalls, the impact of these actions is evident in the increasing proportion of teaching that is good or better. Governors and senior leaders evaluate the school accurately and have a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Governors are tenacious and regularly revisit aspects of the school's work, such as the use of the pupil premium funding, to check it is effective.
- The school has a positive relationship with the local authority that has recently carried out a review of the effectiveness of the English and mathematics departments. Partnership work with another school is helping to ensure that assessment in English is robust and accurate. Collaboration with another neighbouring school has successfully extended the range of courses that are offered to sixth form students.
- Teachers' lessons are regularly observed and inspectors agree with leaders' judgements of the quality of teaching in the school. A targeted programme of mentoring and coaching is in place to support improvement where necessary and this links to decisions about teachers' pay. Leaders hold underperforming staff to account and on occasion this has included withholding pay increases and entering into capability procedures. Teachers take part in regular development activities aimed to improve aspects of teaching, such as the provision made in lessons for students for whom English is an additional language.
- The curriculum has been regularly reviewed at each key stage to ensure that it meets the changing needs of students, a range of pathways that include academic, practical and vocational subjects are available. The school has been successful in ensuring that all students achieve well across a range of subjects and this is demonstrated in the improvement of the capped points score (best eight) over the last three years. Off-site provision is delivered by Leeds College for a relatively small number of students (five students in Year 11), this provision is quality assured through the local authority. A designated school coordinator checks the attendance, behaviour and safety of these students through regular visits to the college.
- Enrichment activities support the curriculum and students are encouraged to participate regularly, the school's records show that participation is increasing. The school's cultural diversity is celebrated through a range of events and the school is beginning to make effective links with different communities, for example, through local mosques. Students are given

opportunity to take on responsibilities particularly for working with younger students. Students' spiritual awareness is less well developed.

- The school has a broad definition of safeguarding and a dedicated team of staff ensures causes for concern are acted upon swiftly. All statutory requirements are met and the school takes steps to ensure that it is knowledgeable and up to date through membership of the local authority reference group and by providing up to date training for staff on current issues such as forced marriage.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school very well and are effective in providing high levels of support and challenge to the headteacher. They are well organised and have the necessary expertise to form accurate, independent judgements about the effectiveness of the school. Governors carefully scrutinise financial information, particularly that relating to the spending of the pupil premium and ensure that its use is properly targeted and effective. Governors have ensured that performance management is fair and take objective decisions based on the evidence presented to them. All teachers' targets derive from the school improvement plan and are carefully monitored through the designated committee. Governors fulfil their statutory duties very effectively.
 - Governors are active in developing strong links with the local and wider community. They ensure that parents can give feedback at school events and they have acted upon this to strengthen relationships with parents who are less involved in the school, for example, by being present at some students' reintegration meetings when they return to school after an absence or exclusion.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	108055
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	400066

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,120
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Amanda Jahdi
Headteacher	Simon White
Date of previous school inspection	22 June 2011
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