

# Canon Lee School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121662
<b>Local authority</b>	York
<b>Inspection number</b>	380295
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 February 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Wendy Ripley HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	734
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Deborah Duffield
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kevin Deadman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 February 2009
<b>School address</b>	Rawcliffe Drive Clifton Without York YO30 6ZS
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Wendy Ripley  
Keith Massett  
Robert Birtwell  
Tony Price

Her Majesty's Inspector  
Additional inspector  
Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 30 lessons taught by 29 teachers and one higher level teaching assistant. Meetings were held with two groups of students, three members of the governing body, a local authority officer and school staff, including senior and middle managers. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, development plan, key safeguarding procedures, student tracking and assessment information and minutes of the meetings of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection and analysed 122 parental and carers' questionnaires and others completed by students and staff.

## Information about the school

Canon Lee is slightly smaller than the average-sized secondary school. Most students are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of students who are disabled and those with special educational needs is broadly average; as is the percentage with a statement of special educational needs. An all-weather sports pitch has recently been completed. The school specialises in the arts and hosts the City of York's performing arts service. The vacated primary school adjacent to the school has recently been acquired and plans are in place for this to become the school's arts centre. The school has gained a number of awards including Healthy School Status, the Artsmark Gold and the Investors in Pupils award. The school met the government's floor standards which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in the 2010/11 academic year.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

### Key Findings

- Canon Lee is a satisfactory school. It has a number of strengths including the good relationships that students have with staff and each other and the excellent range of extra-curricular activities that the school provides.
- Students enter Canon Lee in Year 7 with broadly average levels of ability in English and mathematics. In 2011, students left Year 11 with attainment that was broadly average. Taking their starting points into account, this represents satisfactory progress for most students.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory. While just over two-thirds is good and some is outstanding, it is not consistently good enough to make sure that students always make the best possible progress in all lessons. The progress students make varies by subject. For instance, it is better in English and science than it is in mathematics.
- New systems to monitor and track students’ attainment and progress have recently been introduced but teachers are not routinely using this information to plan classroom activities that meet students’ individual learning needs. Students are not always clear about their targets or what they need to do to achieve them. The quality of teachers’ marking and written feedback lacks consistency and all too often it does not inform students how they can improve their work.
- Important partnerships have been forged to ensure that the curriculum provides a broad range of academic and vocational subjects that meets the needs of almost all students well. The good practice that exists to extend students’ literacy and numeracy skills in some subjects is not being effectively shared throughout the school.
- Inspection evidence, including that from parents and carers, confirms that behaviour has improved markedly since the last inspection. Most students enjoy learning and behave well in lessons and around the school. Occasionally, where

weaker teaching fails to engage students productively, a very small minority of students interrupts lessons and disrupt others' learning. Students state that staff usually deal with any such instances quickly and effectively.

- The overall rate of attendance has also improved and is now broadly average. While the proportion of students who are persistently absent has reduced considerably, this remains above the rate found in similar schools. School leaders have appropriate plans in place to tackle this.
- Additions to the senior leadership team and at middle manager level have resulted in renewed vigour and satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement. New strategies and procedures are now being developed and implemented, although it is too early to see their full impact on student outcomes. However, financial constraints and a lack of leadership capacity until recently, have resulted in plans and actions that have not been focused sharply enough on maximising outcomes for students. The school's performance systems have not been sufficiently rigorous to hold staff to account.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise students' achievement and accelerate their learning in all subjects, especially mathematics, so that it is consistently good or better by:
  - increasing the proportion of lessons in which students make at least good progress
  - using assessment information to make sure lesson-planning and delivery always take account of students' differing levels of ability, especially for higher-ability students
  - ensuring that students' targets for improvement are challenging, relevant and discussed regularly with them
  - improving the quality of marking and ensuring that written feedback always explains to students what they need to do next to improve their work further.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - holding staff fully accountable for their students' progress and achievements
  - sharing the good practice that already exists in some subjects to develop and extend students' literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects
  - sharpening school improvement and subject-planning to ensure that it always focuses on improving outcomes for students and includes realistic and timely targets based on rigorous evaluation of the school's work
  - embedding newly-emerging systems and procedures as quickly as possible and monitor and review their impact rigorously to ensure that they are being applied consistently throughout the school.

## **Main Report**

### **Achievement of pupils**

There has been a slowly rising trend in students' attainment in national examinations over the last three years. As a result, the school achieved its best ever set of results in 2011. The proportion of students attaining five or more A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics, rose to 54%, bringing it close to the national average. School assessment data show that further improvements in students' achievements are expected this year. Nonetheless, the rate of improvement against some national benchmarks has not matched the pace of improvement seen nationally. This means that overall, while the progress and attainment of most sizeable groups of students are broadly in line with similar groups of students nationally, gaps with national performance are not narrowing at a fast enough pace.

Evidence from lessons seen during the inspection and analysis of students' books indicate that students make at least satisfactory progress in the vast majority of lessons. When most students leave the school, their communication skills, including their reading and writing and proficiency in mathematics, are broadly average. Disabled students and those with special educational needs make similar progress to that of their peers due to effective support such as additional individual or small-group sessions.

Most students have positive attitudes to lessons and want to do well. Students generally apply themselves to tasks diligently and purposefully and co-operate even when lessons are uninspiring. Students make most progress, and the best learning takes place, where teachers use a range of activities and techniques such as skilful questioning to engage students as active participants in their learning and which consolidates and builds on earlier knowledge and understanding.

Students' conversations with inspectors and their responses in the inspection survey indicate that a small minority of students believes they do not learn as much as they could in lessons. Inspection evidence confirms that higher-ability students in particular do not always receive challenging enough work in all subjects and this limits their enjoyment of learning and the progress they make. The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection survey considers that their child is making good progress and the school helps their child develop skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics.

### **Quality of teaching**

The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection survey considers their children are well-taught. Teaching is judged satisfactory because, while there are strengths, it is not good consistently enough across the school to make sure that all students make the best possible progress in all lessons and all subjects. In satisfactory lessons, planning is not always precise enough and activities not always sharply matched to students' abilities, resulting in mainly whole-class activities where work lacks challenge, especially for higher-ability students.

In all lessons, good relationships between adults and students build their confidence and self-esteem successfully and this helps to promote positive attitudes to learning. Students speak confidently and thoughtfully when responding to questions or when seeking clarification about their work. Students have well-developed social skills. As a result, they are generally sensitive to the needs and interests of their peers, taking turns and encouraging each other when working in groups or pairs.

The best lessons are well-planned and carefully managed to include all students. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are enthusiastic communicators who use a good range of activities to capture students' interest and make learning relevant. There is a brisk pace and good-quality questioning ensures that teachers accurately assess the quality of students' learning and progress. In these lessons, students respond quickly to staff and apply themselves wholeheartedly to learning.

Weaker lessons are characterised by lengthy periods of 'teacher talk' that are symptomatic of too great a focus on teaching and giving information, rather than engaging students actively in their own learning. As a result, students are not engaged fully, and their learning is slower. In a very small proportion of lessons, these circumstances also create the instances of poor behaviour that a small minority of parents and carers and students reported in the inspection surveys.

The school has recently improved the quality of its assessment and tracking data. This is now reliable and rigorous but the data generated are not being used effectively to plan activities that closely match students' varying learning needs and provide the right level of challenge. While there are some pockets of good practice, the quality of marking and teachers' written feedback varies from good to inadequate. Teachers' comments do not always explain to students what they need to do next to improve their work and students are not always clear about their individual targets or what progress they are making towards these. The responses from parents and carers and students to the inspection survey reflect these points.

Teachers have worked effectively to broaden the curriculum. A strong emphasis on students' personal development helps lower-attaining students with weaker academic skills to find appropriate employment and training routes when they leave school. The good practice seen to promote the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills in some subjects is not routinely embedded throughout the school. Students and parents and carers alike appreciate the excellent range of extra-curricular activities the school provides.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Students report that they feel safe and say overwhelmingly that adults are very approachable if they have any concerns. They have a good understanding of the risks to which they may be exposed, both within and outside of school. Incidents of bullying in any form are very rare. Students, parents and carers express confidence in the school's systems for dealing with any such occurrences.

Concerted actions taken by school leaders have resulted in a three percentage point increase in attendance in the year to date, bringing the students' overall attendance very close to the national average for secondary schools. The number of students

that are persistently absent from school remains higher than is usually found, but it has reduced considerably over the past three years. This is because of the school's determined efforts to ensure that the range of provision and support it provides engages those students most at risk of poor attendance more effectively. Appropriate strategies are in place to reduce the rate of persistent absence further by targeting the very small minority of students proving most resistant to coming to school.

## **Leadership and management**

School leaders are open and honest and have a clear picture of the school's strengths. They have tackled the areas for improvement from the previous inspection satisfactorily, but there has been a tendency to overestimate the progress the school has made on its improvement journey. Insufficient leadership capacity in recent years has hampered the school's ability to tackle some areas of weakness swiftly and decisively. As a result, improvement priorities are not as sharply focused as they need to be to ensure that all students not only attain as well as they possibly can but also make consistently good or better progress. Success measures, together with monitoring and evaluation arrangements within the school and subject development plans, are not rigorous enough to ensure that all staff are held to account fully for the achievements and progress of their students.

The recently extended leadership team is enabling responsibilities to be distributed more widely and this provides the school with a better capacity to sustain further improvement. There are promising early signs that key improvement priorities are being rolled out more effectively as a result. For instance, student data and tracking systems have been extensively overhauled. The information generated is now being used systematically by school leaders to identify underachievement and strategies to tackle this are being developed. Strengthened arrangements for the co-ordination of provision for disabled students and those with special educational needs are resulting in improved outcomes for these students. More robust strategies to monitor the quality and impact of teaching through lesson observations and student performance meetings, are currently being developed. Staff development and training activities are making a satisfactory contribution to improvements in the quality of teaching, but there have been limited opportunities for staff to share the good practice that is emerging in some subjects and departments.

The impact of the curriculum on students' outcomes is good. It enables students to work with other education and training providers linked with the school and as a result a broad range of academic and vocational subjects meets the students' needs and interests very well. This has had a positive impact on improving students' attendance. Similarly, the school has used its arts specialism well to increase levels of participation especially for those students who have been traditionally hard to engage. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory; arts-based activities that extend into the local and wider community such as musical performances, offer a variety of experiences that contribute to it well. The school tackles any discrimination robustly. The extent to which it promotes equality of opportunity is satisfactory. This is because while the school is equipping the students with the skills and knowledge they need for their next steps in education, training or employment satisfactorily, is not narrowing the gaps in performance with their peers nationally at a fast enough pace.



Governance is satisfactory. Members of the governing body are involved in the life of the school and carry out their responsibilities to safeguard students effectively. Arrangements meet current statutory arrangements. Members of the governing body have a clear understanding of what is working well and what needs to be better, but the information they receive has not always been presented in a way that enables them to challenge leaders fully on the progress students make. Appropriate plans are in place to tackle this.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the way the school communicates with them and responds to their concerns. A very small number of parents and carers wrote additional comments on the inspection survey and the vast majority of these were positive. Where parents and carers did raise concerns, inspectors investigated these thoroughly throughout the two days. They discussed them with students and school leaders without jeopardising the anonymity of the parents and carers or the students concerned. School leaders are taking appropriate actions to follow up on the concerns as a result.

## 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



3 February 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Canon Lee School, York, YO30 6ZS**

On behalf of the inspection team, thank you for making us feel welcome when we came to inspect your school. We found Canon Lee to be a satisfactory school with a number of strengths. You make satisfactory progress in your learning and attain broadly average standards. Most of you have positive attitudes to learning and feel safe and happy at school. You show respect and care towards each other and enjoy working together in your lessons. Through good links with other education providers there is a broad range of subjects you can choose to study. You really appreciate the strong relationships you have with staff and all the extra activities they provide for you. Behaviour has improved. Most of you behave well in lessons and around the school. In a very few lessons, your learning is disrupted by another student. You told us that staff usually deal with this quickly and effectively. Most of you come to school regularly, but a handful of students still take too much time off school and this limits their learning. School leaders are working hard to tackle this.

You told us that there have been several improvements since the previous inspection. To make your school even better we are asking the headteacher, the staff and governors to take a number of actions to ensure that you make better progress in all your subjects, especially in mathematics. These include:

- making sure that teachers plan activities that provide you with the right amount of challenge; especially for higher-ability students
- ensuring that teaching is good or better in all lessons and all subjects
- ensuring that teachers mark your work regularly and their written feedback always explains how you can improve your work further
- providing you with individual targets that challenge you
- improving the leadership and management of the school, for example, by making sure that the systems and procedures are used consistently and by holding staff to account fully for your achievements.

You can all help to improve Canon Lee by attending school regularly and continuing to contribute to school developments. We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Ripley  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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