

# Lakers School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115774
<b>Local Authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	357817
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 October 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Sanderson

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>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	719
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Duggan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison Elliott
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 February 2008
<b>School address</b>	Five Acres Coleford GL16 7QW
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 25 lessons, observing 25 teachers. They held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation, planning and policy documents and students' books. Inspectors analysed questionnaires completed by staff and students, and 210 parents and carers.

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

- the effectiveness of action to improve students' progress and raise attainment, particularly in English and mathematics.
- whether all groups of students, but particularly lower ability students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making similar progress.
- the extent to which all teachers are making consistent and effective use of assessment data to plan lessons that meet the needs of all students.
- how effectively all leaders in the school are taking action to reduce the variation in students' achievement between subjects.

## Information about the school

The number of students on roll has decreased since the last inspection and the school is smaller than most secondary schools. Most students are of White British background and the proportion of students whose first language is not English is well below average. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below the average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The school obtained specialist status in business and enterprise in September 2007 and became a cooperative trust school in July 2010.

**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?**

**4**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to students' achievement in English and mathematics.

◆ Students' attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 11 has been significantly below the national average for a number of years. Attainment in English has declined slightly during the past two years and there has only been a modest improvement in mathematics. As a result of low attainment in these subjects, the proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, is significantly below the average and did not improve in 2010. Students' inadequate achievement in English and mathematics is in contrast to their satisfactory, and in a few cases, good achievement in other subjects. This variation in achievement between subjects is reflected in a lack of consistency in the quality of teaching across the school. Despite this variation, the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. A number of lessons are captivating and effective and enable students to make good or even better progress. However, too many, particularly in English and mathematics, are no better than satisfactory because they are not well planned to meet the needs of all abilities of students and the lessons proceed at a pedestrian pace. The quality of written feedback to students about how to improve their work also varies across the school.

◆ The curriculum is good and in Years 10 and 11, the broad range of both academic and vocational courses offered meets the needs and interests of students well. The achievement of students on vocational courses, particularly in the school's specialist subjects of information and communication technology (ICT) and business studies is having a positive impact on examination performance in these subjects. However, opportunities for students to practice and improve their literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects in the curriculum are not fully developed.

◆ The strength of the school lies in its welcoming, inclusive ethos. Staff know students well and are very successful in supporting and nurturing their personal development. They work effectively with a wide range of external agencies to provide students, whose circumstances have made them vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, with a very good level of care and support. Students enjoy school and this is evident in their improved attendance which is now above average. There is a harmonious atmosphere in the school, students get on well with each other and their

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behaviour is good. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

◆ Procedures for self-evaluation are sound and senior leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Some curriculum leaders monitor provision and students' outcomes in their subject well and take effective and concerted action to raise attainment. However, this is not consistently the case across all subjects. Senior leaders have established a good central system to track the progress of students. Underachieving students, particularly in Years 10 and 11, are identified quickly and provided with effective intervention programmes. This is beginning to have a positive impact on their progress and early evidence shows that attainment in mathematics is beginning to rise. This, combined with good developments to the curriculum, improving attendance and a clear plan to tackle areas of identified weakness, demonstrates that the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise students' attainment, particularly in English and mathematics, by:
  - ensuring that all teachers make effective use of data to plan and deliver lessons that are challenging for all students
  - ensuring all lessons are delivered at a good pace and no time is wasted
  - ensuring that all teachers use a range of teaching styles so that students are inspired and fully engaged by lesson activities
  - ensuring that teachers' planning and lesson delivery makes the most effective use of teaching assistants to support students' learning
  - ensuring students receive regular written feedback that is of a consistently high quality that shows them how to improve their work
  - continuing to develop effective strategies to share the best teaching and learning practice in the school.
- Ensure that all curriculum leaders rigorously monitor the quality of provision and outcomes for students in their subject area and take effective action to tackle underperformance and drive improvement.
- Provide further opportunities for students to practice and develop their literacy and numeracy skills across the school curriculum.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**4**

Students made good or even better progress in around half of the lessons observed during this inspection. However, in English and mathematics lessons the progress made by students was satisfactory rather than good. Students' achievement in English and mathematics is inadequate because attainment in these subjects is low and progress in lessons is no better than satisfactory. Students' progress is stronger in other subjects and their achievement in these is at least satisfactory. Both boys and girls and the small percentage of students from minority ethnic groups make similar progress in lessons.

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Support in lessons for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory and as a result, they achieve similarly to their peers.

Students respond positively to the opportunities provided for them to become actively involved in their learning. They willingly and productively engage in practical tasks and in paired and group discussion work. However, if lessons are not engaging or lack pace, a few students lose concentration and behave in a silly manner. Students enjoy school. They socialise very well with each other and have a very good moral understanding of right and wrong. Students' cultural and spiritual development is outstanding because the school teaches them about different lifestyles, cultures, races and religions extremely well. Assemblies very effectively give students time for reflection and as one student stated, 'They really give us the opportunity to get in touch with our emotions.' Students value and benefit from the wide range of opportunities they are given to take responsibility and contribute to the school community, for example through the student council, school prefects and junior sports leaders. In discussions, students are very clear about how to stay safe and report that they feel safe in school. They say that incidents of bullying are rare but if they do occur staff take this seriously and effectively deal with the issue. Students are aware of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and many participate in after-school sporting activities. Enterprise education is strong in the school and the broad range of vocational courses available to students helps develop their work-related skills well. However, low attainment in literacy and numeracy means that their preparation for the world of work or the next stage in their education is no better than satisfactory.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

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

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## How effective is the provision?

All lessons are characterised by good relationships between staff and students. Teachers have good subject knowledge and effective use is made of ICT resources to aid learning. Where teaching has the greatest impact on learning, the planned work meets the needs of all students well and quickly engages their interest. Teachers' explanations are clear so that students understand what they are required to do and learning proceeds at a good pace. In the less successful lessons, teachers do not make effective use of assessment data to plan activities that meet the needs of all students in the class. Teachers often talk for too long, do too much work for students and do not provide activities that engage and interest them. There is some effective marking in the school that gives students clear feedback about what they need to do to improve the quality of their work. However, in some cases, books are marked regularly but helpful advice is not given to students about how to improve, and in a few instances, books are not marked regularly enough.

◆ The curriculum is well organised, regularly reviewed and developed in order to better meet the needs and interests of students. Initiatives within the curriculum include new courses in Years 7 to 9, such as 'Lakers Bureau of Investigation' which is having a positive impact on students' personal learning and thinking skills. In Years 10 and 11 a broad range of academic and vocational courses are offered to students. This range is extended through effective partnership working with the schools and colleges in the Forest Consortia. The school's specialism is clearly reflected in the curriculum with all students following a course in ICT in Years 10 and 11. Many students participate in the wide range of extra-curricular activities, which have a positive impact on their personal development. Aspects of the school's specialism are woven into the after-school events through such activities as Young Enterprise and ICT clubs.

◆ The inclusive ethos of the school ensures that students are cared for and supported well. The school provides a welcoming environment and the transition arrangements which start in Year 5 are very successful in securing a smooth transfer to the school. The sensitive and well-managed support for students whose circumstances have made them vulnerable is very good and their needs are particularly well met. Well-targeted out-of-class support enables students with special educational needs and/or disabilities to make good progress in these sessions. However, teachers' planning does not always ensure that teaching assistants are used to best effect when supporting the learning of these students during lessons. Students know they are respected and valued as individuals and have great confidence in the advice that the school offers. For example, they report being able to make informed choices about courses on offer in Years 10 and 11 and about their future careers options. The provision for encouraging good attendance is well planned and effective.

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*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

There is a clear commitment from a dedicated headteacher, respected by staff, students and parents alike, to improve all aspects of the school. She and senior leaders have established a shared sense of purpose among those who work in the school. The leadership team is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all students and recent refinements to the school's tracking system mean that underperforming students are now quickly identified and provided with support. This is beginning to have an impact on the progress made by students. Self-evaluation and planning for improvement are robust at senior leadership level. However, inconsistencies in the work of curriculum leaders to monitor and evaluate and drive improvement are resulting in variation in achievement between subjects. The governing body is supportive of the school and fulfills its statutory duties. It is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and provides a satisfactory and increasing level of challenge to the senior leadership team. There is a robust approach to managing the safety of students, and systems to assure safeguarding requirements and assess risk are good.

◆ The school is effective in promoting community cohesion within its local community and links have been created with the wider global community through initiatives such as the International Schools award.



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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>4</b>

## Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of questionnaires received from parents and carers were supportive of the school. A number of parents praised the school's transition arrangements and commented positively about their child's enjoyment of school. A few isolated concerns were raised by parents but there was no particular pattern to the issues raised.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of students registered at Lakers 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 210 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 719 students registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	65	31	134	64	9	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	76	36	130	62	2	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	65	31	119	57	22	10	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	52	25	139	66	9	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	48	23	148	70	4	2	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	22	132	63	23	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	15	141	67	29	14	1	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)	61	29	132	63	6	3	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	50	24	144	69	10	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	18	133	63	23	11	4	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	13	138	66	20	10	1	0
The school is led and managed effectively	69	33	129	61	4	2	3	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	75	36	123	59	8	4	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



22 October 2010

◆ Dear Students

◆ Inspection of Lakers School, Coleford, GL16 7QW

◆ On behalf of the inspection team, thank you for the warm welcome you extended to us during the recent inspection of your school. We very much enjoyed our discussions with you. We judged that despite strengths in the school, your attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 11 is too low. Your achievement in these subjects is not good enough and we have, therefore, given your school a 'notice to improve'. This means that other inspectors will visit the school again soon to check that it is improving.

◆ The following points are the key strengths of your school:

- there is a harmonious atmosphere in the school. You get on very well with each other and have a very strong moral understanding of right and wrong.
- your cultural and spiritual development is outstanding because the school teaches you extremely well about different cultures, races and religions.
- you behave well in lessons and willingly become involved in the activities organised for you by teachers.
- the large majority of you enjoy school and your attendance has improved and is now above the national average.
- you are provided with a wide range of both academic and vocational courses in Years 10 and 11 that meet your needs and interests well.
- you are well cared for and supported by staff. You told us that you feel safe in school and we agree with you.

In order to improve the results you get in examinations at the end of Year 11, particularly in English and mathematics, we have asked the leadership team to make some important improvements. In your best lessons, teachers involve all of you in tasks that are challenging and engaging, activities proceed at a good pace and some of you are well supported by teaching assistants. We have asked the leadership team to make sure that more of your lessons are like this, particularly in English and mathematics. We have also asked them to work closely with curriculum leaders to reduce the variation in your achievement between subjects and to ensure that you are given plenty of opportunities to develop your literacy and numeracy skills. You can help to make these improvements by continuing to attend regularly and getting actively involved in activities arranged for you by staff.

◆ I wish you all best wishes for the future.

◆ Yours sincerely

Peter Sanderson Her Majesty's Inspector

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