

# Lees Brook Community School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	137420
<b>Local Authority</b>	N/A
<b>Inspection number</b>	386188
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Nada Trikic 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>	Academy
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1160
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	89
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Eddy Hindmarsh
<b>Headteacher</b>	Phil Dover
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	N/A
<b>School address</b>	Morley Road Chaddesden Derby DE21 4QX
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 43 teachers and 44 lessons, including eight joint observations with members of the senior leadership team, and held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including: improvement plans, the analysis of students' progress, records of classroom observation, attendance and monitoring information. They analysed and considered questionnaires returned by 150 students, 42 staff and 405 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well are the needs of high-attaining students met through teachers' lesson planning and delivery?
- What is the effectiveness of actions taken to reduce the variation in standards across subjects?
- Is the information gained from monitoring sixth form attainment, progress and personal development sufficiently robust to ensure accurate self-evaluation to drive improvement?

## Information about the school

Lees Brook is a larger-than-average secondary school and has a small sixth form. The vast majority of the school population is from White British backgrounds with a very small proportion from a range of minority ethnic groups. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of students identified by the school with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. An enhanced learning centre provides for the needs of 12 students with a range of needs, including moderate and specific learning difficulties, with admission arranged by Derby City Children and Young People's Department. The school gained specialist status for sport in 2001, followed by languages and vocational education in 2006. In 2008, a Vocational Skills Academy was opened for post-16 students to provide vocational courses at entry level, level 1 and 2. This attracts students from across Derby City and South Derbyshire.

In 2010, Lees Brook gained Trust status with local partners, and it converted to academy status in September 2011. The school holds a number of awards including Sportsmark, the International Schools Award, Inclusive Quality Mark and Healthy Schools status.

Repairs to the main buildings cause regular disruption to the timetable for staff and students. At the time of the inspection the sports hall was not available for lessons.

**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?**

**2**

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

**2**

## Main findings

Lees Brook is a good school. A strong team spirit, high expectations and driving ambition have led to notable improvement. The sixth form Skills Academy is good and meets the diverse needs of students particularly well. Staff have created an exceptionally safe environment which is highly praised by parents, carers and students. In an inclusive and harmonious community, excellent relationships underpin students' positive attitudes to learning. The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. This is shown in high levels of attendance and excellent support for students and their families. A good range of GCSE and vocational courses that motivate and interest students, an emphasis on improving teaching quality, and a sharper focus on tracking students' progress have been instrumental in raising overall standards. These features, together with a strong commitment to improvement across the whole school, demonstrate good capacity to improve.

From broadly average starting points, students reach standards that are above average overall, and make good progress. In recent years the proportion of students gaining five or more high-grade GCSE passes has increased sharply, to well above average. Overall outcomes disguise variations in attainment between subjects. The proportion of students gaining the top A\* and A grades varies across subjects and between boys and girls. The school has been successful in increasing the proportion of students gaining a grade C in English and mathematics, but not enough students gain the top A\* and A grades despite a good improvement in mathematics this year. Leaders have conducted a rigorous analysis to identify the causes of a dip in English standards. In part, this can be explained by staff changes that affected continuity in learning. However, assessment and predicted grades had not been secure and some groups, such as the boys, had not performed as expected. Swift action has been taken to tackle this with tighter monitoring and a stronger focus on improving rates of progress across Key Stage 3. Despite this dip the proportion of students who make the two levels of progress expected in English and mathematics from Key Stage 2 continues to exceed national expectations. The achievement of students in the learning centre is good. Their progress is tracked effectively and supported by interventions that are based on a thorough analysis of gaps in learning in English and mathematics.

The quality of students' learning experiences is good overall but varies across lessons. Strengths seen in teaching include very positive relationships between students and teachers, resulting in mutual respect and a calm and productive learning atmosphere. Assessment data and marking are used consistently well to

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give meaningful feedback to students. Where teaching is less effective, assessment is not used well enough to plan tasks to meet students' learning needs across the ability range or to adjust plans during lessons. Students enjoy opportunities to discuss their learning through paired, group or whole-class work, although this is not a strong feature in all lessons. Planning for cross-curricular contributions to literacy and numeracy is satisfactory, but not yet developed well across all subjects.

Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, although self-evaluation is overgenerous in some aspects. Strengths in leadership lie in the strategic approach to improvement that is bringing together information on teaching quality and students' progress to shape personalised training for teachers. Leaders recognise that greater flexibility in monitoring teaching so that resources are targeted sharply on relative weaknesses is the next step to further reduce variation in standards, and to strengthen accountability.

Staff deserve great credit for creating a vibrant learning environment despite poor quality buildings in the main school that require frequent repair, and cause disruption. In contrast, the purpose-built Skills Academy provides an excellent environment for students to progress well on a range of vocational courses. The quality of leadership and management is less well developed in the sixth form. Progress tracking and improvement planning are not sufficiently embedded to support self-evaluation to drive the Skills Academy forward.

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

- Ensure greater consistency in standards across courses and increase the proportion of A\* and A grades by:
  - ensuring accuracy in assessment and predicted grades
  - regularly checking on progress against explicit milestones for individuals and groups of learners
  - holding teachers and teams to account when results do not match the school's best performance.
  
- Achieve greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning by increasing the proportion of securely good and outstanding teaching through:
  - effective use of students' prior learning and assessment information in all lessons
  - greater challenge for higher-performing students
  - regular checks on students' progress during lessons so that plans and tasks are adjusted to consolidate or accelerate learning
  - more opportunities for students to discuss their learning
  - effective planning for literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.
  
- Improve the quality of leadership and management in the Skills Academy by:
  - regularly and robustly tracking students' progress
  - holding subject leaders accountable for self-evaluation and improvement.

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## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Leaders have been successful in closing the attainment gap for those students known to be eligible for free school meals through greater rigour in tracking different groups of learners. This has also led to a higher proportion of merit and distinction awards on BTEC courses. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well compared to national results and make good progress from their various starting points. This is the result of rigorous monitoring of progress, good leadership, effective intervention in the learning centre, targeted in-class support, and high-quality care and guidance.

Students display a strong desire to learn and this contributes effectively to their good learning and progress. In the best lessons self- and peer-assessment help students to identify where they need to focus. This was the case in a media lesson. Students were challenged to produce a video clip under pressure to report the visit of a celebrity chef. References to assessment criteria, peer review and feedback were effective in identifying areas to improve. The second 'take' confirmed that all students had acted on feedback to strengthen their performance. Students respond well to challenging tasks, work hard, concentrate and take responsibility. They are helped to develop resilience and independence in their approach to learning through access to different sources of information and classroom displays. On occasions, the pace in lessons is too fast and students do not have enough time to consolidate their learning.

Other features of student outcomes include the following.

- Behaviour is good; students are friendly, polite and courteous. Students appreciate the zero tolerance approach to inappropriate behaviour but report a few inconsistencies in the implementation of the school's policy.
- Students have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and a good awareness of risks associated with smoking, drugs and alcohol. Large numbers of students participate enthusiastically in sporting activities.
- Students make an excellent contribution to the school community through a wide range of leadership roles and opportunities to mentor younger students who need extra help. Students provide strong support to new students.
- Students feel very proud of their school. They express concern about the poor quality of the buildings.
- Spiritual development is particularly strong because many opportunities are available for students to reflect and experience empathy and wonder through assemblies and areas of the curriculum. Plans are in hand to give students more opportunities to learn about different cultures.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

**Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning**

2

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Taking into account:	2
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</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>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

High expectations, good planning and skilful questioning were common features in the good teaching observed. In the best lessons students are active learners and inspired by the teachers' energy, enthusiasm and expertise. In these lessons assessment is woven seamlessly into activities to accelerate and consolidate learning, but in others students are less aware of the progress they are making. Key stage targets are challenging; students accept these and work hard to achieve them. Targets are used effectively in most lessons and discussed with students. Assessment information on students' individual needs is used to inform plans and lesson activities in the best lessons, and when this is, the case progress in learning is very rapid.

Students appreciate the wide range of courses on offer, which are enhanced by opportunities to complete sports leadership and young apprenticeships with local providers. Construction, caring for children and hair and beauty are available on the foundation pathway to meet vocational interests. Innovations in the curriculum include the one-year GCSE mathematics course in Year 10, changes in time allocation in English and course changes in science. Although these changes have been well received, leaders have not gathered data to identify the impact on progression rates to advanced courses. The personal, social, health and economic education programme is well organised, responsive to students' needs and prepares them well for the future. Sport as a specialist subject is a strong feature of extra-curricular provision. Specialist language skills are used effectively to support languages in primary schools and partnership links with the local football club.

Transition arrangements for students moving from Year 6 into Year 7 are extremely

<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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thorough. There is a firm commitment to each student with a range of effective interventions and support systems to meet academic, social, emotional and personal needs. Students are very confident that there are adults they can turn to for help. New roles continue to develop to meet identified needs. For example, the home-school liaison officer works extremely effectively with families. Links with external support agencies are well developed to provide additional expertise and support. There are striking case studies that demonstrate the dedication and commitment of the staff to remove barriers and promote opportunities.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
<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>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, senior leaders and staff have been successful in raising aspirations and instilling a strong sense of purpose and belonging in the school. Leaders and staff share a strong passion and drive to improve the achievement and life chances of its young people. Safeguarding procedures are effective and the school has robust measures to ensure students' safety. Students have a strong understanding about how to keep themselves safe through the personal and community education programme. Very thorough and rigorous subject review procedures, combined with an ambitious timetable of monitoring, provide leaders with a very good overview of teaching and learning. The training programme is informed by subject review, drop-in monitoring, work scrutiny and performance management to provide a coherent programme to improve teaching and learning. Weaknesses in teaching are intensively coached by senior staff. The evaluation of programmes is not sufficiently developed to ensure that improvement is fully embedded. Improvement plans set out clear priorities, although success criteria are not always measurable with milestones and monitoring arrangements to ensure that progress is rigorously evaluated.

Other aspects of leadership and management include the following.

- Governance is good. The governing body has a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of strengths and areas for improvement. The range of skills, expertise and experience across the governing body is fully utilised.
- Leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to the promotion of equal opportunity. Bullying is rare, and dealt with promptly if it occurs. Leaders are increasingly taking steps to tackle identified differences in performance between subjects and groups of learners, and to identify strategies to help. The school engenders respectful relationships.
- Community cohesion is promoted particularly well within the school and its



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feeder schools, stemming from a strong awareness of the local context, and this is evident in the inclusive ethos. Care is taken to welcome all members of the community. A helpful audit identifies cross-curricular contributions to extend students’ awareness of national and global communities. Coordination and evaluation of the impact are less well developed.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>2</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>2</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>2</b>

## Sixth form

The Skills Academy is an outstanding facility with industry standard resources, and specialises in meeting the needs of students with few qualifications on entry. One student commented, ‘It’s not like a normal sixth form. The groups are small and we get along. The academy has made a big difference to us.’ A small range of vocational and basic skill courses are complemented by good opportunities to develop personal, social and work-based skills in preparation for the future. This was evident in the hospitality and catering lesson where students worked enthusiastically to bake a cake for ‘Children in Need’. Students make good progress overall, in line with their capabilities. There is some variation across courses but success rates are high. The Skills Academy is highly inclusive and ensures individuals are very well supported. Relationships between students, teachers and teaching assistants are strong. Good teaching that ensures a wide range of practical and engaging activities, and outstanding care, guidance and support, contribute to positive outcomes for students. Leaders ensure that the Skills Academy operates effectively on a day-to-day basis. Weaker aspects of leadership and management are the tracking of students’ progress and planning for improvement.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

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<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

## Views of parents and carers

The school has the overwhelming support of the parents and carers who returned questionnaires. They appreciate and value the experiences provided for their children, information provided on progress, and the extent to which the school keeps them safe.

A very small minority report that the school does not take account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors found examples where the school had responded to feedback such as changes to parents’ evening arrangements. The headteacher did accept that more could be done to provide feedback on suggestions made. A very small minority indicate a concern about the school’s efforts in promoting a healthy lifestyle for students. Inspectors were impressed with the range of sporting activities available, and high levels of participation. Inspectors also found that students were knowledgeable about health risks, and what constituted a balanced diet. However, choices are not regulated across the three dining rooms to encourage students to follow through their awareness, for example, to eat five portions of fruit and vegetables a day.

Additional comments made by parents and carers on the questionnaire complimented staff on the welcome they received. A small number raised concern about the disruption to education caused by supply teachers, particularly in mathematics. School leaders share this concern and take steps where possible to provide specialist teachers. Stability in staffing has improved this year. A number of parents and carers drew attention to deficiencies in the state of the buildings. Inspectors are sympathetic to these concerns expressed.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of students registered at Lees Brook Community 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 405 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1160 students registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	127	31	254	63	17	4	4	1
The school keeps my child safe	149	37	239	59	11	3	1	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	155	38	234	58	10	2	3	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	125	31	252	62	19	5	3	1
The teaching is good at this school	125	31	257	63	9	2	1	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	107	26	252	62	33	8	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	94	23	251	62	45	11	0	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)	152	38	228	56	9	2	2	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	119	29	251	62	21	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	206	51	169	42	20	5	4	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	87	21	253	62	36	9	1	0
The school is led and managed effectively	142	35	233	58	16	4	2	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	173	43	210	52	16	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 8 April 2011 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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.**

18 November 2011

Dear Students



### **Inspection of Lees Brook Community School, Derby, DE21 4QX**

Thank you for the friendly welcome when we visited recently. We were very impressed with your behaviour, attitudes to learning and strong desire to achieve. You were very clear that school is an extremely safe place to be. You are keen to take on leadership responsibilities linked to sport and different subjects, to mentor younger students, and welcome new ones. You are very proud of the school and your achievements but disappointed about the quality of the buildings.

Lees Brook is a good school and the Skills Academy is also judged to be good. From broadly average starting points, you reach standards that are above average overall by the end of Year 11, and make good progress. The proportion of you gaining five or more high-grade passes continues to rise. This improvement is the result of a wider range of courses, stronger teaching and better ways to track your progress. However, standards vary across subjects and we have asked leaders to continue to raise standards and increase the proportion of A\* and A grades through accurate assessment and regular checks of your progress.

The quality of teaching is good overall but varies across lessons. You enjoy excellent relationships with staff and make good progress when you are challenged by interesting tasks and opportunities to discuss and share your learning. Not all lessons help you to learn at a good rate. We have asked leaders to increase the proportion of securely good and outstanding teaching.

Those of you in the Skills Academy benefit from a purpose-built facility. You make good progress and benefit from good teaching and high quality care, guidance and support. We have asked leaders to make improvements in the way that progress is tracked to drive priorities for improvement.

The headteacher, senior leaders, staff and governing body work extremely hard to provide the best possible experiences. They have created a strong community spirit and deserve great credit for providing a vibrant learning environment despite the challenges presented by the buildings. We are sure you will want to continue to work hard and contribute to the next stage of development. Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nada Trikic  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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