

Lakelands School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	123566
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	395478
Inspection dates	21–22 June 2012
Lead inspector	Liz Talmadge

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	572
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stuart Bingham
Headteacher	Ian Sanders
Date of previous school inspection	10 October 2006
School address	Oswestry Road Ellesmere SY12 0EA
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Age group	11–16
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Introduction

Inspection team

Liz Talmadge

Additional Inspector

Robert Pritchard

Additional Inspector

Thomas Walton

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 24 classes taught by 23 teachers. Five lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors held meetings with groups of students, the Chair of Governors and school staff, including senior and middle leaders. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the tracking of students' progress, students' work, performance data, the school development plan, subject reviews, school policies, school monitoring reports, incident logs and case studies. Completed questionnaires from 113 parents and carers, 88 students and 39 staff were received and analysed.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average. The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. Most students are White British; there are a small number of students from minority ethnic groups and a few who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students supported by school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is above average and the proportion of students supported by school action is broadly average. The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs has increased in recent years. The school has received a number of awards including that of the Eco-council, the Sports Mark and the International Schools' award. It also has Healthy Schools' status and Extended Schools status. The school has had funding reductions in recent years and employs fewer staff than at the time of the last inspection. The headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection.

The school meets the government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Lakelands School is a good school. It is not yet an outstanding school because teaching is not enabling all students to make rapid and sustained progress.
- Key Stage 4 students make good progress and obtain results above the national average. Key Stage 3 students also make good progress but it is not as rapid as it could be. Students who are supported by school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs are making good progress due to the very well targeted specialist support they receive.
- Teaching is good overall and some of it is outstanding. In the best lessons teachers plan carefully, and provide a range of resources and tasks to ensure that students of all abilities make good progress. Sometimes, however, teachers do not plan tasks, or provide resources to ensure all students are challenged to learn well. Teachers provide good verbal feedback but in Key Stage 3 written feedback does not always tell students precisely what they have to do to improve the quality of their work.
- Behaviour is outstanding and students show an excellent understanding of how to stay safe; almost all students say they feel safe in school. Students show very positive attitudes towards their learning and are consistently supportive of each other in lessons and in their behaviour throughout the school. Students are keen to succeed and are enthusiastic and motivated learners. Attendance is above average.
- The leadership of teaching and the management of performance in this highly inclusive school are good. Leaders are well aware what needs to be done to improve. The promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is well established throughout the school. Governance is strategic and clearly focused on the future development of the school. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on existing good practice to ensure the quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 is consistently good or outstanding by:
 - ensuring that all teachers plan tasks that match students' individual needs so that all groups of students receive the appropriate support and challenge and make faster progress
 - improving written feedback to students so that they know what they need to do to improve the quality of their work.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Students arrive at the school with attainment that is broadly in line with national averages. They leave having attained standards that are consistently above national averages: this represents good progress. Though there was a dip in 2011, results were still above average. Though unavoidable staff illness contributed to the dip the school acted quickly to provide a much more rigorous monitoring and tracking system for current Year 11 students, backed up by intervention systems and additional support. The school's most recent tracking data indicate that standards have risen again.

All groups of students make good progress despite learning in some lessons occasionally slowing when activities are not pitched well to students' abilities. In a good lesson seen, students worked together well and there was effective use of assessment when students evaluated each others' work. Students use numeracy and literacy skills with confidence across the curriculum. Reading is a strength of the school with a range of reading programmes for all students.

Those students supported by school action plus or a statement of special educational needs are making good progress. School data show that these students are making progress in line with other students and closing the gap on students nationally. This is because students' needs are screened rigorously when they arrive at the school, the resulting information about their specific needs is shared well with teachers and specialist staff use the information to make detailed plans which are closely monitored.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly happy with the progress that their child is making in the school. Students know their current levels and grades and most lessons refer to assessment criteria so that students know what is required of different levels of learning. At Key Stage 4 students are confident about how to reach their target levels. In Key Stage 3 good quality written feedback to each student to

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ensure that each one of them knows exactly what they have to do to reach those different levels is not so well established. As a result progress in Key Stage 3 is not as fast as it could be.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good. Relationships between teachers and students are strong and students are highly motivated to do well. Teachers are enthusiastic and have good subject knowledge. In the best lessons teachers encourage students' responses through insightful questioning. The best teaching is carefully planned to recognise the different learning needs of individuals and groups of students and this results in good or better progress being made. For example, a drama lesson challenged all students to develop empathy skills in order to understand a difficult moral issue. More confident students were then encouraged to develop innovative ideas, whilst others rehearsed skills. Students with different aptitudes and abilities then all contributed toward an outstanding whole class performance. In a science lesson activities and resources were carefully matched to the levels that students were working at. This enabled them to demonstrate their good subject knowledge and their ability to use scientific language appropriately, and to make good progress. In other subject areas there was good evidence seen of one-to-one support and challenge for students. This enabled teachers to prompt students verbally at key times enabling them to make effective progress in their learning.

These very good practices are not a feature of all lessons in all subjects. Lesson planning at Key Stage 3 is not always based on data about students' prior achievement, nor on what the teacher has established that they already know. As a result, tasks and resources are not always well matched to students' individual needs.

The teaching of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is good. Supported by appropriate data, provided by the specialist teachers for special educational needs, good planning is leading to good progress for this group of students. Basic skills are taught well and students communicate effectively. Reading is a high priority for the school and enjoyed throughout the school. Opportunities are taken to develop student spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by using well-chosen resources and appropriate activities. Parents and carers agree that students are well taught at the school.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students' behaviour is outstanding. Their positive attitudes to lessons and their keenness to learn is exemplary. Even when teaching is not good or outstanding, students are nonetheless enthusiastic to be taught and to contribute to the learning of themselves and others. They work collaboratively in class and benefit from each others' support. This makes a strong contribution to students' good learning and progress. Parents and carers agree that behaviour is good.

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Students are introduced to, 'the Lakeland way', early in Key Stage 3. This influences their attitudes to learning and to each other throughout their time in the school. They are courteous and welcoming and they look after one another well. Behaviour is outstanding regardless of it being supervised or unsupervised.

The school provides a caring environment in which students' safety is given a high priority. Students, including those who may be vulnerable, disabled students and those with special educational needs, report feeling safe in school. Students are extremely well aware of how to stay safe and how to support each other. They can describe what action they might take to combat different types of bullying. Bullying is dealt with swiftly and effectively. Exclusion from school is unusual here, and there have been no permanent exclusions for many years.

Attendance is well above average and instances of persistent absence are low. Parents and carers are in complete agreement that the school ensures the safety of their child.

Leadership and management

Since his appointment the headteacher has managed a period of significant change. The senior team are committed and enthusiastic, working very hard and giving direction to the school under the purposeful guidance of the headteacher. The headteacher and governors have an ambitious vision for the future of the school. Students and staff are proud to be part of this inclusive school. Its commitment to equality of opportunity is evident in the good achievement of all groups of students.

The school has demonstrated the capacity to improve further. It knows itself well and evaluates its strengths and areas for improvement correctly. Priorities for school improvement, identified in the school's own planning, are understood and actively supported by leadership at all levels. More robust monitoring and tracking has had a significant impact since the dip in the 2011 GCSE results. Professional development has been effective in securing good teaching. Middle managers make an effective contribution to subject and pastoral leadership.

The curriculum is good: it is well organised and imaginative. The school's work in sport and languages make a strong contribution to students' breadth of experience. It promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through arts and cultural events, assemblies and the activities that have contributed to both an International Schools' Award and an Eco Council award. There are very many extra-curricular opportunities for students including programmes that develop students as leaders such as the Sports Leaders Award and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. The school makes extensive use of the on-site sports centre to provide a wide range of sport and fitness clubs.

Governors give good direction to the school and are active and effective in their roles as link governors to subject areas and school activities. They both challenge and support, and ensure that the school meets all safeguarding requirements. The school

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engages well with parents and they in turn are very supportive of the school and the work it is doing. The school has established a very good reputation in terms of its work with disabled students and those who have disabilities or special educational needs.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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).

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.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



25 June 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of The Lakelands School, Ellesmere, SY12 0EA

Thank you for the warm welcome that you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and talking to you about your school. We sat in on many of your lessons, looked at a lot of your work and talked with many of you. Thank you for sharing your views with us and for completing the questionnaires.

We were very impressed by your outstanding behaviour. We saw you working really well together in lessons, supporting each other and sharing ideas. When we walked around the school you were all always very polite and welcoming. You are clearly proud to be Lakeland students. You told us that you feel safe in school.

You go to a good school. You make good progress and, by the end of Year 11, your attainment is above average. You enjoy school and your attendance at school is very good. The school is well led and teaching is good. We saw some very good lessons during our two day visit.

School leaders are working hard to make sure that you have the best possible experience of school but we have asked them to do a little more. We think that your progress in Key Stage 3 could be faster and the school agrees with us. So we have asked them to make sure that there is written feedback on the work that you complete so that you know what you need to do next to improve your work. We have also asked them to make sure that teachers plan activities that match your ability. For some of you this will mean you feel better supported in your learning and for others it will mean more stretch and challenge.

You have a part to play in this. Your continued excellent behaviour in the classroom will help teachers to make changes that help you to learn faster.

I wish you all well.

Yours sincerely

Liz Talmadge
Lead inspector

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