

# Lavington School

The Spring, Market Lavington, Devizes SN10 4EB

## Inspection dates

26–27 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- There has been a dip in the school's performance over the past 18 months. Examination results have fallen.
- There are two main causes for this decline:
  - variability in the quality of teaching
  - weaknesses in the Key Stage 4 curriculum.
- These weaknesses have had a particular impact on the achievement of certain groups of students, particularly lower ability students and those with special educational needs.
- The senior leadership team has an accurate view of the school's effectiveness, but middle leaders' evaluations of their areas of responsibility are more variable in quality. Some are insufficiently precise and thorough.

### The school has the following strengths

- Students behave well. They feel very safe, secure and happy in school.
- Students achieve particularly well in mathematics.
- Senior leaders and governors candidly acknowledge the decline in the school's performance and understand the reasons for it. They are doing the things necessary to secure improvement. The school is now improving again.
- Concerted action has been taken to deal with the weakest teaching; the results of this work are clear. Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and are supporting further improvement. Although the overall quality of teaching is not good, there is much good and some outstanding practice.
- Improvements are being made to the Key Stage 4 curriculum to ensure that it meets students' needs more closely.
- Improvements in teaching and the curriculum are reducing the variability in achievement between different groups of students.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 34 lessons, with a number of briefer visits to other lessons.
- Meetings were held with students, staff and members of the school’s governing body.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a wide range of documentation.
- They considered the six responses to the online (Parent View) questionnaire and other questionnaires completed by staff.

## Inspection team

Christopher Russell, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Linda Peck	Additional inspector
Sheila Crew	Additional inspector
Christopher King	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Lavington School is a converter academy, established in January 2011 from a maintained school in the control of Wiltshire local authority. When it was last inspected in 2008, the overall effectiveness of the predecessor school, which was also called Lavington School, was judged to be outstanding.
- The school has mathematics and computing specialist status.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals (for whom the school receives the pupil premium) is below average.
- Few students are from minority ethnic groups and few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action, or at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, are below average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set minimum expectations for students' attainment and/or progress.

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

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good by ensuring that:
  - when teachers work with the whole class, they do not talk for too long, and they make better use of questioning to engage, interest and challenge students
  - lessons in subjects across the curriculum support the development of students' literacy skills
  - all lessons provide sufficient challenge for students
  - the good and outstanding practice that exists across the school is shared effectively with all staff.
- Ensure that the evaluations produced by leaders across the school are sufficiently thorough, accurate and precise.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Students generally join the school with above-average starting points. Examination results have fallen and are not as high as they were in the predecessor school.
- The 2011 GCSE examination results were mixed. Students of all abilities did well in English and mathematics; this was particularly the case in mathematics, where students' achievement was excellent. The proportion of students who gained five or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, was above average and as expected given these students' abilities.
- By some other measures, particularly students' overall GCSE score, students did not do as well. This was partly because the Key Stage 4 curriculum was not well matched to some students' needs and students ended up with relatively few qualifications. This affected the achievement of a number of groups of students, particularly lower ability students, students with special educational needs, and those known to be eligible for pupil premium.
- Early analysis of the unvalidated 2012 GCSE results points to a slight drop in the proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C with English and mathematics. However, students' overall GCSE performance improved. This was particularly the case for the groups of students who underperformed in 2011; the gap between these and other students' achievement closed significantly.
- Students across the school are now increasingly making better progress because teaching is more consistent and the curriculum meets their needs more closely. Students currently in Year 11 are on track to achieve more than students who took examinations last year.
- Students typically speak confidently and clearly. Most have good literacy skills.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching is variable in quality and is not consistently good, although there is much good and some outstanding practice.
- The key strengths in almost all lessons are the rapport and relationships that students have with their teachers. Students find their teachers friendly and supportive, and are positive about school.
- Some teaching is outstanding. In one Year 11 technology lesson, for example, students made rapid progress with their coursework because of the teacher's meticulous planning and organisation, very high expectations and absolute clarity about what individual students needed to do to achieve the highest GCSE grades.
- There are two common weaknesses in less effective lessons. In some cases, teachers spend a long time talking to the whole class, but ask students few questions. The questions that they do ask are too easy and do not probe students' understanding. This limits students' interest in the lesson and students do not learn as much as they could.
- In some lessons, the level of challenge is not appropriate. This is usually because the work is too easy or students are given too much time to complete it. In part, this is because too little account was taken of individual students' targets and current achievement when the teacher planned the lesson. As a result, students make some progress, but they could achieve more.
- The quality of marking and feedback to students is inconsistent. Some gives students a clear idea about how to improve their work. Other marking is sporadic or not as helpful.
- The extent to which teachers of subjects across the curriculum help students to develop their literacy skills is variable. There is some excellent practice to draw on. In one science lesson seen during the inspection, students were able to practise and improve key literacy and oracy skills as they developed new scientific understanding. The teacher's rigorous focus on both general and science-specific literacy had a marked impact on the quality of

students' writing. Interesting and challenging questions grabbed the students' attention and provoked high-quality debate about the differences between heat and temperature.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The school is a friendly and welcoming place. Students point to the advantages of the school's size and the way in which this helps them to get to know staff and other students.
- The way in which the school supports and cares for its students is a significant strength. Students say that they feel very safe and secure. They say that bullying is rare and that staff deal effectively with any incidents that occur. Teachers help them to develop a clear understanding of the different kinds of bullying.
- Students behave very well around the school site. They are considerate and polite. Behaviour in lessons is typically good, and sometimes outstanding. Students cooperate well. Very little misbehaviour was observed during the inspection, although students say that lessons are occasionally disrupted. Their view was that this is more common in lower ability setted classes.
- The school is inclusive and welcoming. A number of students at risk of permanent exclusion from other schools have been welcomed into the school on managed moves. These and other students with significant needs are provided with a wide range of pastoral support.
- Attendance levels are high and continue to rise. The attendance of students with special educational needs and those known to be eligible for free school meals was relatively low in 2011; the attendance of students from these groups improved last year following intensive support by staff.

### **The leadership and management require improvement**

- The school's performance has dipped in recent years. It is now improving again because senior leaders have recognised the decline, analysed the reasons for it and are doing the things necessary to bring about improvement.
- The last 18 months have been a difficult time for the school. Senior leaders had to deal with turbulence in staffing and some ineffective teaching. These issues have now been largely resolved: inadequate teaching is now very rare and a number of new teachers joined the school at the start of the school year. The time taken to deal with these problems did, however, limit the capacity of senior leaders to improve teaching more widely across the school.
- Leaders across the school are involved in monitoring and evaluating aspects of the school's work. Senior leaders in particular have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Middle leaders' evaluations of their areas of responsibility are more variable: some are thorough, but others lack precision and detail. Senior leaders are working to reduce this variability.
- The inspection team's view of the quality of teaching was similar to, but slightly less positive than, the school's. Inspectors' judgements about the quality of teaching were generally similar to the school's tracking of its own lesson observations, but inspectors saw less good or outstanding teaching than this tracking indicated.
- Teaching is improving as a result of the school's actions and the support that is being provided. Performance management systems are well organised. Appropriate targets are set for teachers, although some are not specific enough about the intended impact of any improvements on students' achievement.
- As the school is a converter academy, it does not receive support from the local authority. However, the school has commissioned a consultant to provide support and challenge for the senior leadership team. His reports provide a useful external review of performance. They are shared openly with the governing body.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- governors have a thorough and realistic understanding of the school’s strengths and weaknesses, and recognise that its performance has declined
  - the work of the governing body was reviewed a year ago; this review resulted in a number of valuable changes and governors now provide effective support and challenge to the school’s leaders.
- Before this year, the Key Stage 4 curriculum did not fully meet all students’ needs because the range of subjects was too narrow. This led to the underachievement of some students, particularly those of lower ability and some students with special educational needs. A wider range of courses is now in place and further changes are planned. The curriculum now meets students’ needs more closely.
- Systems and processes that keep pupils safe meet government requirements well.
-

## What inspection judgements mean

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

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136389
<b>Local authority</b>	NA
<b>Inspection number</b>	395670

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	706
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Wilkinson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Martin Watson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	NA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01380 812352
<b>Fax number</b>	01380 818492
<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@lavington.wilts.sch.uk



Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2012

