

Leysland High School

Winchester Road, Countesthorpe, Leicester, LE8 5PR

Inspection dates 18–19 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Leysland High School is an outstanding school providing an exceptionally high quality of education for all its students.
- Achievement in all subjects is outstanding. The wide range of subjects studied helps to make sure that students are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their lives.
- Students who are supported by the pupil premium, disabled students and those who have special educational needs all make outstanding progress thanks to very well considered help and guidance.
- Teachers also usually give students helpful guidance through comments in marking, although this is not fully effective in all subjects.
- A large proportion of students are involved in community events, fundraising and out-of-school activities.
- The overwhelming majority of teaching is good or better, and a very high proportion is outstanding.
- Students are extremely polite. Their outstanding behaviour in lessons supports their learning extremely well. They feel safe and secure in a very respectful environment.
- Leaders and managers work extremely well to establish a culture of continuous improvement that results in an excellent learning experience for all students.
- Governors hold the school very effectively to account and have taken robust action to make sure improvements have been sustained.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 29 lessons, of which five were seen together with senior leaders.
- Discussions were held with the co-headteachers, the Chair, Vice Chair and Finance Chair of the Governing Body, a local authority representative, heads of partner schools in the South Leicestershire Learning Partnership, senior leaders, staff and groups of students.
- Inspectors took account of the 68 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire and the 51 responses from the staff questionnaire distributed for the inspection.
- Inspectors looked carefully at a wide range of documents, including the co-headteachers' reports to the governing body, the school improvement plan, the system to track students' progress, records relating to behaviour and attendance, information on teachers' performance, safeguarding records and a sample of students' work.

Inspection team

Neil Stanley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janet Harvey

Additional Inspector

Jacqueline Pentlow

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Leysland High School is smaller than the average secondary school.
- Students come from a wide geographical area, including Countesthorpe, Blaby and the surrounding villages. Many come from the City of Leicester.
- The school population is mainly White British, with very few students from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- A below-average proportion of students are supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, students from armed services families and students who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- No students are currently educated in alternative provision away from the school site.
- The government's current floor standards do not apply to this school, as students are only educated up to age 14.
- The school became an academy in August 2012. The predecessor school of the same name was judged to be outstanding when last inspected by Ofsted.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that all staff provide consistently high-quality written feedback for students in all subjects, so they are able to make even more rapid progress in their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Students' attainment when they join the school is usually broadly average, although in recent years it has been weaker in reading and mathematics. By the time they leave it is consistently above average in all subjects, and particularly in English and mathematics. This is because the school's systems for monitoring progress, supporting students and providing guidance are highly effective.
- Teachers' expectations for what students can achieve in English are particularly high. In a Year 7 lesson, students were evaluating the impact of regional language use on cultural identity. The maturity and understanding in their comments would not be out of place in a GCSE lesson.
- Students are given many opportunities to produce extended pieces of writing when working in different subjects. Examples seen included writing on climate change in geography and the dilemmas of Queen Elizabeth I in history.
- Disabled students and students with special educational needs make outstanding progress thanks to very effective individual help and guidance from staff. Their attainment gets closer to that of other groups of students as they move up the school.
- The school provides very good support for students who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium and, as a result, these students are making rapid and sustained progress and improving their attainment in English and mathematics. The effectiveness of this spending is fully evaluated by school leaders and governors. There were not enough pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in 2012 to comment on their attainment without identifying individuals.
- In addition to academic success, students gain skills in leadership and teamwork through, for example, the Young Leaders programme and the Reading Buddies mentoring scheme. The take-up rates for the wide range of additional activities and clubs beyond lessons are very high. The quality of art and ceramic work is exceptional, and the school organises a successful annual art exhibition within the local community.
- Students praise the way the school supports those who are gifted and talented. This has included work with the New Walk Museum, a media project with De Montfort University and a visit to Leicester University. Students say these events have made them more aware of higher education and the world of work.
- The school carefully checks the achievement of pupils in Year 7 and gives extra help to those who are not doing as well. This helps them to catch up quickly.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Across all subjects, teachers plan lessons thoroughly that build on previous learning and enable students of different abilities to make consistently rapid progress. They use a wide range of well-judged and often inspirational activities that, together with sharply focused and timely support, match individual needs exceptionally well.
- At Leysland High School, students relish their learning. This enthusiasm was evident, for example, in a Year 7 history lesson on the Black Death, students were clearly looking forward to

continuing their learning at home.

- Teachers are aware of the importance of improving literacy levels and have a consistent approach to spelling, grammar and punctuation. This was especially evident in the marking of mathematics work. In class, teachers regularly challenge students to extend their vocabulary.
- Teaching in mathematics is particularly impressive, and this leads to many students reaching standards that are well above national expectations for their age. Students are encouraged to take the skills learned in one subject and apply them in other areas. For example, teachers frequently seize opportunities to develop students' numeracy skills in different subjects such as science, where students use graphs to evaluate evidence.
- Across the different subject areas, teachers work with each other and with colleagues from local schools to make sure their marking is accurate and consistent.
- Teachers generally use the 'Purple Pen of Progress' system to provide students with detailed feedback on how to improve their work. This works particularly well in religious education and science. Students are increasingly given the opportunity to respond to the marking and show immediate improvement. However, in some subjects, this is not always the case.
- Teachers use probing questioning in lessons to make sure students understand the work. When a student asks a question, it is usual for the teacher to respond by asking, 'What do you think?' Students feel this helps them think for themselves.
- More-able students often help those who are less confident in class. For example, in a Year 9 English lesson, the teacher deliberately created groups with a mixture of abilities. Students feel this helps them to gain confidence, learn from each other and understand the work more quickly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students excellent behaviour in lessons and calm, polite and courteous manner around the school make a substantial contribution to the productive school environment and their academic and personal achievements.
 - Students do not feel that bullying is a problem in this school. However, they are confident that if any did arise it would be dealt with quickly and effectively by teachers. Students are aware of the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, racism, sex and gender bullying or other forms of harassment.
 - The school makes every effort to ensure students feel safe and secure. Students display a very good understanding of the issues relating to safety. They talk confidently about how they would keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, such as using the internet and social networking sites. They receive good information on sex education. Inspectors observed an assembly that gave students information on the dangers of smoking, alcohol and drug misuse.
 - Students listen to each other and respect each other's opinions. They are confident to share their ideas in class. Students praise each other when they answer a question correctly, and support each other when they are not right.
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- The school has a consistent approach to encouraging good behaviour. Students think this is clear and fair.
- The school has a long-standing convention of allowing students to use teachers' first names. Inspectors were impressed by the maturity, trust and respect shown by students towards their teachers.
- Students' enjoyment of school is reflected in their attendance, which is well above average. Levels of persistent absence are very low. Students' outstanding punctuality reflects their enthusiasm for their school and their learning.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leysland High School is exceptionally well led by its co-headteachers, who have ensured that, following a period of instability, students' achievement has continued to improve.
 - Subject leaders have confidence in, and the support of, their senior managers. This has allowed them to be innovative in the classroom and in their decision-making.
 - Newly qualified and less experienced teachers believe Leysland High School is a supportive environment in which they can share ideas and learn from each other. They feel this is a school in which their teaching will improve. Links with neighbouring schools have enabled teachers to learn from each other and share good ideas in a professional climate of trust. The school has made good use of support from the local authority and also worked with colleagues in the South Leicestershire Learning Partnership when appointing the headteacher designate.
 - The school emphasises the importance of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this is evident across the subjects. For example, students in English debated moral dilemmas, and in French they discussed fair trade. As a result, students are very aware of their place within the world and have a strong sense of moral purpose.
 - The school provides a very wide range of subjects, with a strong emphasis on art, music and modern foreign languages. This rich and rewarding experience means students are exceptionally well equipped for future studies.
 - Regular and rigorous lesson observations are highly effective in helping staff, who are very keen to learn from lesson observation feedback, to improve their skills. Good use of the outcomes from these observations leads to well-considered training for individual teachers.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is outstanding. The governors play an important role in school life by regular visits and meetings with staff to gather evidence about how well the school is doing. Senior managers keep governors very well informed about the achievement and progress of different groups of students in the school.
 - Governors are very well trained and provide excellent challenge to the senior leaders, holding them to account very well. Through rigorous planning and prudent budgeting, governors are ensuring the school's financial stability. They make sure that the school's excellent policies and procedures for safeguarding fully meet national requirements.
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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

Unique reference number	138529
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	413476

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	585
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Matt Brown
Headteacher	Jonathan Sleath and Jane Smibert
Date of previous school inspection	N/a
Telephone number	0116 277 1841
Fax number	0116 278 3157
Email address	admin@leysland.leics.sch.uk

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