

Lealands High School

Sundon Park Road, Luton, LU3 3AL

Inspection dates 15–16 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Senior leaders have established a community to which staff and students are proud to belong. The school's motto to '*Aspire Believe Achieve*' is an accurate reflection of students' very positive attitudes and performance.
- Since the headteacher arrived two years ago the school has improved rapidly. Teaching, behaviour, achievement, leadership and management are all better than they were at the time of the last inspection.
- Students' behaviour in class and around the school is exemplary. Attendance has risen, and exclusions have fallen. Additional opportunities to learn and develop leadership skills are very well supported by students.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. In these lessons the purpose is clear; the content is interesting; the teaching methods are varied and teachers' passion for their subject is infectious.
- Relationships between staff and students show mutual respect. This means that students' views and teachers' feedback are taken seriously. This helps students grow in confidence and capability.
- Students in all year groups are making good progress across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. In many subjects students attain above-average GCSE results from below-average starting points in Year 7.
- The curriculum includes rich opportunities for physical, creative and intellectual development. This contributes well to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their preparation for further study post-16.
- Less well-off students and those who find learning difficult are given good support. Governors have effectively challenged the school to improve equality of opportunity, judged inadequate at the last inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although students do well, some could do even better, including the more-able students capable of attaining higher GCSE grades.
- A small proportion of teaching requires improvement. In these lessons there is not enough priority given to deepening students' subject knowledge or refining their skills. Too much time is taken on assessment.
- Not all middle leaders have yet sustained a track record of success. Results in modern languages, some humanities and some technology subjects have been lower than students' other subjects.
- The new governing body draws on a limited range of first-hand evidence to challenge the school's leaders, because it is at an early stage of development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 40 lessons, of which eight were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors visited a sample of tutor periods and observed an assembly.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, a group of parents and carers and two representatives of the governing body.
- Inspectors talked with many students about their learning and life at the school. They held meetings with six groups of students and scrutinised their work in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors took account of 24 questionnaires completed by staff and a recent school survey of parents' views. There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to evaluate.
- The inspection team observed the school's work; scrutinised current data about students' achievement; examined records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance; and looked at documents used by leaders in monitoring and evaluating the school's work.

Inspection team

Ian Middleton, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Zarina Connolly

Her Majesty's Inspector

Paul Bartlett

Additional Inspector

Josephine Lewis

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Lealands High School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school works collaboratively with the 'Luton Futures' group of seven high schools and one special school in Luton.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium (extra government funding to support particular groups of pupils) is above average.
- An above-average proportion of students in Year 7 are supported by catch-up funding because they did not achieve the expected level 4 in English while at primary school.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above that found nationally. An above-average proportion of students are supported through school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportions of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are above the national figures.
- The proportion of students who join or leave the school other than at usual transfer times is above average.
- Two students in Year 11 follow off-site provision part-time, linked to their career plans.
- The school meets the government floor standards which set minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding and consistently good teaching by making sure that all teachers:
 - use their subject expertise to model their expectations of students, promoting a passion for their subject
 - focus lesson objectives and activities clearly on extending students' knowledge, understanding and skills, including for the most-able students.
- Improve achievement by:
 - raising and sustaining higher standards in those subjects where attainment is too low
 - increasing the proportion of A* and A GCSE grades.
- Strengthen leadership and management further by:
 - mentoring less effective subject leaders with the support of a subject expert
 - enabling governors to evaluate more of the school's work first-hand.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the school in Year 7 having attained below average standards in reading, writing and mathematics when tested at the end of Key Stage 2. As a result of good teaching that promotes very positive attitudes to learning, students make good progress to reach above-average standards in a range of qualifications at the end of Year 11.
- All students achieved 5 or more GCSE A* to G grades in 2012. The small proportion of students entered early for examinations attain good grades. The proportion of students that achieve 5 or more GCSE A* to C grades including English and mathematics is consistently above average with the exception of 2012, when results in English dipped. However, data showing the extent of pupils' progress including 2012 is consistently and significantly above-average.
- In English literature and additional science students attained above-average GCSE results, including the higher grades. However, in several subjects students achieved below-average A* or A grades. This included mathematics where above-average A* to C grades were attained. In relation to their other subjects, students have done less well in modern languages, some humanities and design and technology subjects in the past. Students' current work indicates good progress in these subjects.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make progress at least in line with that of their peers. Systematic tracking of students' progress and well-targeted intervention and support are contributory factors. Detailed support plans for students who find learning difficult helps staff adapt their teaching.
- The progress made by students who are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is better than that of such students nationally, and the gap between their progress and that of other students is closing in English and mathematics, as measured by their average GCSE point scores. The range of strategies used includes additional staffing to provide more individual support, including with homework.
- Since additional catch-up funding was received extra support has been given to students who had not reached the expected level in English and mathematics before starting at the school. The school has employed a teacher experienced in primary education to help such students catch up. Assessment records indicate they are progressing well.
- Students' enjoyment of reading is improving. The school has increased opportunities for students to read in tutor period and in the context of different subjects. The school library is well used. The 'accelerated reading' programme is popular with students because books are pitched at the right level and evaluation prompts them to reflect on their progress.
- Parents and carers who met with inspectors consider their children make good progress at the school, across a range of courses. Students do achieve good GCSE qualifications and in addition many succeed in national award schemes offered by the school. Students taking vocational courses, including those using off-site provision, succeed because courses are appropriate to their needs.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most teaching, most of the time, is good. This is evident in the lessons observed during the inspection, the school's monitoring records of teaching, and students' progress over time. Students say that the quality of teaching is good and that it has been strengthened in the past year by staff new to the school.
- Relationships within classrooms are very good. Behaviour management is a strength of the teaching, based on high expectations, consistent and fair use of sanctions and rewards and on knowing students well. Teachers use their knowledge of students effectively, to group them for different activities, direct questions and to decide who requires additional support. This helps disabled students and those with special educational needs make progress equal to that of their peers.
- Good emphasis is given to pupils' communication and literacy skills in the context of different subjects, particularly the use of specialist vocabulary when speaking or writing about their subject. The extent to which different subject teachers promote reading is variable. The teachers of English model literacy teaching very well. In a Year 8 lesson the teacher extended students' vocabulary skilfully and corrected their pronunciation sensitively. The quality of teachers' written feedback and questioning demonstrates high quality communication.
- Students are given good feedback about their work. Marking is thorough and constructive. Where marking is having the most impact on students' progress teachers check to make sure that pupils have understood or have taken action. The use of assessment within lessons is not always well timed, particularly where students' absorption in their work is interrupted by activities such as peer assessment. In some lessons there is too much time taken deciding assessment levels at the expense of simply identifying strengths and weaknesses.
- An increasing proportion of teaching is outstanding, with additional levels of challenge to help students extend and apply their subject knowledge and skills. Information and communication technology is used well to exemplify high standards. In the best lessons teachers use their passion for the subject to inspire students to aim high. Students with particular gifts and talents are actively involved in helping others understand what might be possible; a strategy used skilfully in physical education and music.
- There is still a small proportion of teaching that requires improvement. In these lessons, the work set or teaching approaches used are not varied enough to meet the needs of all students. The 'all, most, some' approach to planning is not specific enough. This is particularly the case when the teacher does not use assessment information to ensure that the most-able individuals can move ahead more quickly or attempt more challenging work. In the less successful lessons dependency on planning misses opportunities to deepen learning, for example through improvisation.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary; they respond well to the concerted efforts of staff to correct and reward behaviour accordingly. Students show great pride in their school and grasp opportunities to develop responsibility. This includes students who started with negative attitudes and who are now role models, for example

by leading sports activities or listening to children read in primary schools.

- Students' very positive attitudes to learning are reflected in the high proportion that participate in optional activities before and after lessons. These activities include additional study classes and school performances that are highly praised by parents and carers. Students say that wider curriculum opportunities have increased their motivation because courses are well-matched to their needs and aspirations.
- School records show continuous improvements in students' attendance and behaviour. Exclusions and incidents of bullying or discrimination have declined significantly. This is because students have a clear understanding about different types of bullying and discrimination and the harmful effects they can have. This contributes to students feeling safe and supported in school. They are very confident that any behaviour or safety issues are resolved quickly and fairly. The school is a harmonious multicultural community.
- Students make a strong contribution to their own learning and that of other students in lessons. They contribute thoughtfully in class discussions, participate actively in group work and are sensitive to the views and feelings of their peers.

The leadership and management are good

- Since joining the school in 2011, the headteacher has led the school very well. He has capitalised on the school's new high quality accommodation by establishing equally high expectations of students and staff. He is supported by very able senior leaders who are committed to improvement and who are clear about their contribution. Teaching, students' behaviour and achievement have all improved since the 2010 inspection. The parents interviewed are very supportive of the school's work and appreciative of the improvements made.
- There are strong examples of subject leadership and management. The school's sports specialism and performing arts maintain a high profile alongside a track record of good achievement and improvement in English, mathematics and science. Modern languages, humanities and design and technology are all improving, following a period when students' achievement was too low in these areas of the curriculum.
- Robust systems and processes are in place to enable leaders to monitor and evaluate the school's performance and effectively manage the work of teachers and other adults. Rigorous internal reviews by senior and middle leaders contribute to the accuracy of performance management, particularly when supplemented by external subject expertise. Good collaboration with local schools in the 'Luton Futures' network contributes effectively.
- The leadership team draws readily upon expertise within other schools and organisations. For example, the school has improved provision for spiritual development, a weakness at the last inspection, by working with the Luton Churches Education Trust. The school now promotes different aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development equally well. Support from the local authority promotes links with other schools and specialist consultants who contribute to the professional development of staff, including the headteacher. The local authority contributes to the cycle of review and target setting.
- Senior, middle leaders and leading teachers contribute to improvements in teachers' effectiveness. Professional development opportunities are well-matched to whole-school

and subject priorities. This is because departmental improvement planning both reflects the school's 'achieving excellence plan' and subject-specific priorities. Creative methods of professional development such as filming are helping to improve teachers' self-reflection and responsibility for improvement.

- The range of subjects, academic and vocational options, and breadth of extra-curricular activities meet the needs of students well. Personalisation now starts earlier through choices made by students on 'super-learning' days and mini-options in Year 9. Information and guidance about opportunities post-16 supports students' transition, evident in the very low proportion of past students not in education, employment or training.
- At the last inspection equality of opportunity was judged inadequate. The school now has appropriate policies and practice to ensure that every student has an equal chance of success. This can be seen in the progress tracking and good achievement of different groups of students. The pupil premium funding is a good example of improvement planning and action designed to narrow any gaps in opportunity or achievement that emerge between different groups while at the school.
- The governance of the school:
 - A new governing body has been established since the last inspection. Governors are well-informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses, although the range of first-hand evidence gathered by the governing body is limited. However, their ability to challenge senior and middle leaders is increasing. For example, data training has made governors more confident about challenging underachievement. Governors have used their position effectively to question the impact of pupil premium funding. Their responsibilities, linked specifically to the school's priorities, position them well to hold the school's leaders to account. Governors understand the procedures for performance management and the structures for improving the quality of teaching. They ensure that all aspects of safeguarding are in place and that regulatory requirements are fully met.

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	109686
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	401069

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	742
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Troughton
Headteacher	John Burridge
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2010
Telephone number	01582 611600
Fax number	01582 612227
Email address	Lealands.high.admin@luton.gov.uk

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