

The Lancaster School

Knighton Lane East, Leicester, LE2 6FU

Inspection dates

3–4 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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

- Teaching is not strong enough to promote good achievement for all groups of pupils in all subjects. In particular, disadvantaged pupils and higher ability pupils are not making rapid enough progress.
- Leaders and managers do not use the information they collect about pupils' learning to set appropriate targets and intervene when their progress slows.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. There is some good teaching, but not enough to ensure that all pupils can make good and rapid progress.
- Teachers do not always make sure that the tasks given to pupils are well matched to their interests and ability levels so that all pupils are challenged and supported appropriately.
- Some teachers do not mark pupils' books well enough to show them clearly how to improve their work. Even where marking is better, teachers do not create time for pupils to correct their work.
- Pupils' key literacy skills are not routinely reinforced in all subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and the leadership team are fully committed to the school's success, and GCSE results in English and mathematics are improving year on year.
- Relationships are good throughout the school. Boys' attitudes to learning are generally good, and when they are taught well their attitudes are very good.
- Staff provide good specialist support for boys who are learning English and those who need to catch up with their reading skills.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. This view is supported by parents, who are overwhelmingly positive about their children's education.
- Pupils' social, moral, cultural and spiritual education is good.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 36 lessons or part lessons. Three were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team, and 35 teachers were observed in total. Inspectors also visited an assembly and a number of tutor group sessions.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject leaders and year group leaders. Inspectors also met with a group of teaching assistants, the inclusion manager, the special educational needs coordinator, the attendance officer and the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors listened to the views of four groups of boys representing all year groups, and listened to a small group of Year 7 readers.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 41 parents who completed the online survey (Parent View) and a group of parents they met during the inspection. They also took account of letters received from parents and one telephone call.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at information about pupils' progress and attainment, the school's improvement plan and its evaluation of how well it is doing. They also looked at the staff training programme, the system used to manage staff performance, records of governing body meetings, the headteacher's reports to governors and a range of policy documents.

Inspection team

Liz Talmadge, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jerry Seymour	Additional Inspector
Susan Hickerton	Additional Inspector
Susan Tabberer	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Lancaster School is smaller than the average-sized boys' secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average. This is additional government funding for particular groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals or in local authority care.
- The proportion of minority ethnic pupils is well above average, reflecting the multi-ethnic composition of Leicester. The largest minority ethnic groups are of Indian, Caribbean, African and Pakistani heritage.
- The percentage of pupils whose first language is not English is much higher than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also much higher than average.
- Significant numbers of pupils arrive at the school throughout the year and into all year groups. Many of these pupils are new arrivals to the UK.
- The school caters for a very small number of pupils who are at risk of exclusion by providing a specialist on-site facility offering an alternative curriculum.
- Some pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 attend Leicester College to study work-related subjects; Year 10 pupils for half a day a week and Year 11 for one day a week.
- The school has a new school building programme taking place at the current time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make the quality of teaching consistently good or better, and so raise achievement for all groups of pupils, by ensuring that:
 - tasks and activities are carefully matched to pupils' ability levels and individual needs, particularly for the most able pupils and those supported by the pupil premium
 - marking gives pupils clear guidance on exactly what they have to do to improve their work, and time is given so that pupils can respond to teachers' comments
 - literacy skills are routinely taught in lessons in all subjects.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management by helping all teachers to use information about pupils' attainment and progress to check that all groups are making good progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Although pupils' test and examination results have improved steadily since 2011, too many boys are still not making good progress, especially in mathematics. In particular, the most able boys are not being challenged to reach the higher levels they are capable of.
- The proportion of boys who made the progress expected of them in English in 2013 was a little above the 2012 national average (2013 national averages are not yet available). The proportion making more rapid progress has also risen and is now in line with the national average for 2012 and above average for boys nationally.
- GCSE results in English have risen this year and now match the 2012 national average and are above average for boys. Boys who join the school after the start of Year 7, particularly during Key Stage 4, often do less well than others. This is because they have weaker literacy skills. The proportion of boys gaining an A* to C grade in GCSE mathematics has improved since 2012 and is now above the average for all pupils nationally and above average for boys.
- Year 11 'early entry' in mathematics has resulted in some higher ability boys achieving lower grades than they could have done if they had waited to take the examinations at the usual time.
- GCSE results for 2013 show that standards have been maintained or improved in biology, chemistry, physics, geography, French, religious studies and home economics. English literature, history, electronics and resistant materials have done less well. These inconsistencies across subjects were also seen in the progress being made in lessons.
- The school has used pupil premium funding to provide a range of support including after-school clubs, smaller classes and mentors to help boys to improve their progress. This has led to boys in Year 11 achieving in line with similar pupils nationally, although they do not always make as much progress as the rest of their year group. In 2012 there was a gap of one GCSE grade in English and two-thirds of a grade in mathematics between these boys and the rest of their year group, although they made better progress in English and mathematics than was the case nationally. In 2013, however, the rest of the year group improved their achievement in both subjects and the gap widened again.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has improved this academic year and is now good. Observations of teaching and data held by the school shows that teaching assistants are working effectively to support individuals and small groups to make better progress.
- The Year 7 'catch-up' programme is helping boys who need extra support to make rapid progress in reading, spelling and, for some, learning English as a new language.
- A small numbers of boys study work-related learning courses at Leicester College for one day a week in subjects such as catering, child care, motor vehicle maintenance and public services. The progress boys make is monitored at the end of each module by the work-related learning coordinator and they are awarded certificates for attendance and achievement.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good enough to help all pupils, particularly the most able boys and those supported by the pupil premium, to make good progress. In some subjects

teaching is good and occasionally outstanding, but in others it is not. Some of the best teaching was seen in physical education (PE), music, art and geography, where there was a clear focus on making sure that all boys could make good progress.

- Where teaching is most effective, teachers show that they have good subject knowledge and high expectations. Lessons are planned so that interesting and engaging activities match the needs of boys of differing abilities, enabling them to make good progress. Where teaching requires improvement the same activity is given to all boys, regardless of ability, and is not well matched to the needs of individuals. This results in some boys struggling and some others not being challenged enough.
- Boys are keen to do well but the system to set targets and measure progress used by the school until recently has not clearly identified exactly what teachers need to do to make sure that all boys are making good progress. Data are not used precisely to set targets and monitor how much progress is being made on a regular basis.
- Teachers' marking varies in effectiveness and frequently is not specific enough about exactly how boys' work can be improved. When teachers do mark work carefully, boys are not then given time to respond by making improvements to their work.
- When specialist teachers withdraw pupils from lessons or support them in special language classes, the teaching of literacy and English language is good. Some teachers correct technical language in their lessons, but in general teachers do not pay enough attention to regularly promoting literacy skills in all subject areas. Where literacy teaching is at its best teachers show boys examples of what they need to do to make good progress. When this does not happen, boys who are new to English or who find reading and writing difficult struggle to learn well.
- Assessment is generally used well and some good examples were seen of pupils reviewing their own and each other's work. In these lessons boys were able to measure their own progress against targets set by the teacher. Good examples of target setting were seen in geography and PE, where boys were encouraged to track their progress on a regular basis. Where assessment is not used well, boys are not sure how well they are doing.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Relationships between boys in this multi-ethnic school community are good. Relationships with teachers are also good. When teaching is good or better boys show very positive attitudes to their learning. They are very keen to do well and this helps them to make good progress.
- Boys are well mannered, polite and friendly around the school. They exhibit sensible behaviour throughout the day, despite the ongoing building work and the limited amount of social space available during break and lunchtime.
- Staff have a good understanding of the behaviour policy and use it effectively to provide consistent guidance about the standards of behaviour expected. Boundaries are clear and good behaviour is well supported by a rewards system that the boys value.
- The school's records of behaviour show that it has improved over time. Fixed-term exclusions have reduced markedly and there are very few instances of bullying. Racist and homophobic language is not tolerated and boys express their support for this policy. Parents are very supportive of the school, and all those who responded to the inspection survey or met with inspectors felt that behaviour was good.

- Boys say that they feel safe in school, and they understand how to keep themselves safe. They are taught about staying safe when using the internet and the dangers of extremism.
- Attendance has improved over the last three years and the rate of persistent absence has reduced. Attendance is now average and the school is working strenuously with families to improve it further. Punctuality to lessons is good.
- For boys who are at risk of permanent exclusion the school has set up an effective 'Alternative Curriculum Unit'. This unit caters well for a very small group of boys who respond positively to the opportunity to engage in some 'hands-on' activity such as working on the school allotment.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The headteacher is fully committed to ensuring that the school improves quickly and, with the leadership team has brought about improvements since the last inspection. However, leadership and management are not yet good because both achievement and the quality of teaching still require further improvement. Senior leaders and governors are realistic about the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and know what is needed to secure further improvement.
- The quality of teaching is monitored regularly by the senior leadership team. Joint observations conducted with inspectors confirmed that their judgements are accurate. However, school policies on marking and literacy teaching are not being implemented well by all teachers.
- The information made available to teachers on pupils' performance over time has not been rigorous enough to accurately monitor the progress of boys in their classes. Leaders know this and are now introducing a new system.
- Specialist teams of teachers provide good support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those whose first language is not English. Currently not all teachers support the literacy needs of pupils in their classes.
- The school makes use of independent and impartial careers advice and guidance. Boys report that they can talk to tutors and the careers service in 'drop-in' sessions when they need additional support in preparing for their future.
- The boys' social, moral, cultural and spiritual education is well promoted in many lessons. A Year 8 drama lesson, for example, provided opportunities for boys to reflect on the impact of violence in society, while a Year 10 philosophy class explored the links between animal rights and world religions. A range of after-school sporting and arts activities, assemblies, tutor time and personal, social and health education sessions create opportunities for boys to think deeply about contemporary issues.
- The school uses appropriate systems to manage teachers' performance, and clearly links their performance to decisions about their pay. There is a good training programme available to teachers and good support through the 'Learning Innovation Group'.
- The local authority has worked closely with the school since the last inspection and conducts a performance review of the school annually. It describes the support given as 'high level'. The process of performance management for the headteacher involves the local authority.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governors are led well, and suitably focused on teaching and learning and the progress of pupils. Governors ask for termly reports from school leaders at all levels. They are well informed about the quality of teaching and understand data on pupils' performance. They are fully involved in decisions about teachers' pay awards, and know how the school is performing in relation to schools nationally. They are clear about what still needs to be improved, including the progress of some groups of students. The Chair of the Governing Body actively ensures that governors receive regular training. The governors have provided effective support and challenge since the last inspection. They make sure the school's arrangements for safeguarding meet all national requirements.

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	120283
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	425053

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	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	805
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anthony Greenwood
Headteacher	Russell Kennedy
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2012
Telephone number	0116 270 3176
Fax number	0116 244 8513
Email address	admin@lancaster.leicester.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. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email 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, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: 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.

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
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

