

Lyndon School

Daylesford Road, Solihull, B92 8EJ

Inspection dates

4–5 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Attainment at the end of Year 11 has been too low for last two years in many subjects, particularly for middle-ability students.
- Students make inadequate progress in science in Key Stage 4, and too few gain a good GCSE A* to C grade.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, have not had enough impact on improving achievement in science. They have not acted quickly enough to ensure that teaching is good, or that students are studying a course matched to their skills and abilities.
- Some teachers do not mark students' work often enough, and marking does not always help students to improve their work.
- Students do not always show good attitudes to learning, particularly when teaching is weak.
- Students do not have enough opportunities to write at length in some subjects.
- Not all subject leaders have developed the skills needed to improve teaching and achievement effectively.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have improved the proportion of students who achieve five good GCSE grades at A* to C, including English and mathematics, over the past few years. This has been at a faster rate than in schools nationally.
- Achievement in English is good because teachers plan work that is interesting and pitched at the right level of difficulty.
- The achievement of students supported by the pupil premium is getting much closer to that of other students in English and mathematics.
- Students feel safe at school. Attendance has improved and is now above average.
- Students benefit from a good level of support for their personal development when it is required.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 37 lessons, 14 of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. The inspection team also made several short visits to other lessons to check on the progress and behaviour of different groups of students.
- Meetings were held with three groups of students from Key Stages 3 and 4. Other meetings were held with governors, senior leaders and staff, including those responsible for leading subjects. The lead inspector also met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors analysed 119 responses to the online parent questionnaire, Parent View. They also analysed 36 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including those relating to the monitoring of teaching and the targets set for teachers to improve their work. They also looked at records relating to attendance, behaviour, bullying and safeguarding, the school's improvement plan and data on students' progress.

Inspection team

Richard Sutton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Denise Newsome	Additional Inspector
Michael Miller	Additional Inspector
Carol Worthington	Additional Inspector
Wendy Davies	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is slightly above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also slightly above average.
- The proportion of students who are from minority ethnic heritages is similar to the national average, as is the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium is average. This additional funding is given to schools for students in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and students from service families.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has specially resourced provision for students with special educational needs. It caters for up to eight students who have hearing impairments.
- The school is a Trust school and works closely with a range of partners in the community, including businesses and higher education providers.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, achievement and students' attitudes to learning by making sure that:
 - all teachers use achievement data to match lesson activities effectively to the different skills and abilities of all students, particularly those of middle ability
 - marking and feedback are frequent and provide students with precise advice on how to improve their work, and students are encouraged to respond to teachers' comments
 - teachers check the progress individual students make in lessons, so they can modify the work if some students are finding it too easy or too hard
 - students are given every opportunity to write at length in all subjects when it is appropriate
 - students with hearing impairments are given work that is suitable for their needs whenever they are taught in mainstream classes.
- Raise achievement in science in Key Stage 4 by making sure that:
 - students study courses which are accurately matched to their individual levels of attainment
 - leaders improve the teaching of science to enable more students to reach the highest grades by the end of Year 11.
- Improve the impact that leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, have on students' outcomes by ensuring that:
 - all subject leaders have the knowledge and skills to improve teaching and achievement
 - the targets set for students and teachers in all subjects are challenging, particularly in Key Stage 4
 - the best teaching is shared systematically and effectively across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- In recent years, attainment at the end of Year 11 has been too low in many subjects. This is because many students do not make as much progress as they should, particularly those of middle ability.
- Students' standards in science are far too low when they leave the school, and this has not improved in recent years. Students make inadequate progress in core science and additional science, and in chemistry, physics and biology. Consequently, attainment in all these courses is too low and not enough students achieve a good GCSE grade at A* to C. Only a small proportion achieve the highest grades. Teaching is too often inadequate, and in recent years, unsuitable advice and guidance when choosing their Key Stage 4 science has resulted in too many students studying inappropriate courses. This weakness has been rectified, but it is too soon to see the impact on students' progress and attainment.
- Students from minority ethnic heritages and those who speak English as an additional language make uneven progress because work is not always accurately matched to their abilities.
- Achievement is improving in Key Stage 3, including in science. Many younger students make good progress because work is more often accurately matched to their ability levels, though this varies across subjects and year groups. In Key Stage 4, students make good progress in art, modern foreign languages and history and achievement is improving in English and mathematics. Teaching in these subjects is often good, and activities are interesting and well matched to students' abilities.
- Since 2011, the proportion of students achieving five good GCSE grades at A* to C, including English and mathematics, has improved at a faster rate than it has nationally. The proportion making the progress expected of them in mathematics has been broadly average for the past two years. However, too few make more rapid progress, particularly middle ability students.
- Achievement in English improved significantly in 2013. The proportion of students who achieved a good GCSE grade at A* to C was well above average, and the proportion who made the progress expected of them was close to the national average. However, as in mathematics, not enough students of middle or high ability make more rapid progress.
- Students who are supported in the specially resourced unit make similarly varied progress. It is sometimes slower when they work in classes in the main school and staff do not plan well to meet their specific needs. Other students who are disabled or have special educational needs usually make good progress because teachers have a good understanding of their specific needs and plan work accordingly.
- Students are entered for GCSE mathematics before the end of Year 11. This strategy has helped more students to make the progress expected of them. However, it holds back students of higher ability because too few achieve grades that reflect good progress.
- The school uses the Year 7 'catch-up' funding, which helps students who join with attainment below the expected levels in English and mathematics, to provide extra reading lessons. This is very effective as students are making good progress in reading. Students are also catching up in mathematics, but progress is slower because support is not so precisely matched to their needs.
- The school spends the pupil premium in a wide variety of ways, including on additional staff who

provide academic and individual support for students. Less-able students supported by the pupil premium make good progress, although the progress of students of middle or higher ability is more variable. However, by the time students reach Year 11 examination results show that the school is successfully closing gaps between the attainment of eligible students and others. In 2013, eligible students in Year 11 achieved, on average, one third of a GCSE grade lower than other students in English and two thirds of a grade lower in mathematics.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- In recent years teaching has not had a good enough impact on students' achievement in many subjects, especially Key Stage 4 science. It is clearly improving, particularly in Key Stage 3 and in English and mathematics in both key stages, but is not yet good.
- Middle-ability students do not make as much progress as they should because not enough teachers use achievement data to help them set work which is well matched to the students' attainment and ability. In addition, some teachers do not always check the progress that students make during lessons, so they can change the work if it is too easy or too hard.
- Some teachers provide students with excellent marking and feedback which have a good impact on students' achievement. Where marking requires improvement, students are not provided with clear information about how to improve the work, and students are not encouraged to respond to the teachers' advice. In some subjects, books and folders are not marked as often as they should be.
- Teachers in some subject areas, especially science, do not always give enough emphasis to supporting students to develop their skills in writing at length.
- The teaching of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is good in many subjects, particularly English. The specific support students receive from teachers and teaching assistants is often precisely matched to students' individual skills and abilities, especially in the specially resourced unit. However, the support for students who have hearing impairments is not as effective when they are taught in mainstream classes and as a result these students do not progress as well as they should.
- Students sometimes benefit from good or outstanding teaching, and this is becoming more frequent. For example, in a Year 10 mathematics lesson the teacher planned work at different levels and students were able to progress at their own pace. The level of challenge was high and students were determined to succeed. Consequently, they made good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Students generally behave well in lessons, but their attitudes to learning require improvement because some students become too easily distracted when the work is not challenging enough.
- When work is challenging and pitched at the right level, most students work hard and show a determination to succeed.
- Most students behave well around school and at break times and they are well mannered, polite and courteous. Exclusions have reduced significantly.
- Students benefit from highly effective care and support which they receive from all staff when

required. This results in a school where relationships are positive, and where students show a good level of respect for each other and their teachers.

- Bullying is rare and students have a secure understanding of the various forms in which bullying can occur, including cyber-bullying. They are confident that staff deal with matters quickly and effectively if bullying does happen. Consequently, students feel safe at school.
- Most students have an appropriate understanding of safety issues. For example, they know about how to minimise risk when working or socialising online. The school ensures that students receive good advice regarding safety issues and regularly involves a range of outside agencies, such as the police and theatre groups, to give students the information they need to keep safe.
- In recent years, attendance has improved considerably as a result of effective strategies that leaders have introduced in partnership with outside organisations. Consequently, the proportion of students who regularly miss school has fallen significantly and attendance is above average.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leaders and managers, including governors, have not made sure that achievement in Key Stage 4 science has improved. In addition, they have not made sure that enough teaching is consistently good or outstanding to raise attainment in many subjects from below-average levels.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, have not made sure that the science courses which students study in Key Stage 4 are well suited to individual students' skills and abilities, particularly those students who study the three separate science subjects.
- Students' achievement is improving, particularly in Key Stage 3, but there is some variation. The inconsistencies result from some subject leaders not having fully developed skills to check teaching and achievement effectively. This is now being tackled through coaching from senior leaders to develop their skills, but the best practice is not yet shared sufficiently widely.
- Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and students' achievement because they make regular checks to identify what needs to improve. Improvements in teaching have had a positive impact on attainment, which has improved faster than seen nationally in recent years. In English, attainment rose to well above average this year because teaching is often good.
- The approach to setting achievement targets for students, which the headteacher introduced two years ago, is beginning to have a positive impact in Key Stage 3. More students are now achieving their targets and consequently making better progress. This has also had a good impact on the proportion of students who make the progress that is expected of them in both English and mathematics. However, students in Key Stage 4 have not had their targets reviewed in all subjects.
- All teachers are set targets to improve their teaching. Success in meeting them guides decisions about pay increases. This process makes an appropriate contribution to improving teaching and achievement, but it is not yet as effective as it should be.
- Leaders and managers are successfully making sure that the achievement of students who are eligible for support by the pupil premium is improving and getting closer to that of their classmates. Although there is some variation, by the time students reach Year 11 the gap in

achievement is narrowing and has been improving for the past three years.

- Students receive very good impartial advice and guidance about their future careers, and some of the Trust partners make a valuable contribution to this. As a result, almost all students leave the school at the end of Year 11 having secured employment, training or courses at college.
- The curriculum provides students with a wide range of opportunities in lessons and additional activities. For example, students are able to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding through a variety of visits to religious sites. In addition, involvement in 'The Big Event' helps them to develop cultural understanding through the performing arts.
- The local authority provided specialist support for mathematics and science during the 2011/12 academic year and support for improving the achievement of the most-able students during 2012/13. This support had a positive impact on achievement in mathematics but very little impact in science. This year, a representative from the local authority is helping the school to hold subject leaders more effectively to account for students' achievement and is working with the school to improve achievement in English, mathematics and science.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has an appropriately detailed understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, including the quality of teaching. Many governors understand data about students' achievement and this enables them to hold leaders to account through regular meetings.
 - Governors monitor the impact that the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding have on students' achievement. They know that most eligible students are making good progress but also that there are inconsistencies.
 - Governors know how targets are set for teachers, and they monitor how these targets are linked to pay increases. They know what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance.
 - Governors make sure that the school fulfils its responsibilities regarding safeguarding. All staff have been checked as required, and are trained appropriately to keep students safe and free from harm.
 - The governing body has influenced the various improvements made by the school. However, it has not been successful in bringing about improvements in achievement in Key Stage 4 science, or ensured that students follow the correct courses for their ability in this subject.

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	104114
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	429485

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1320
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Derek Sheldon
Headteacher	Diane Fellowes
Date of previous school inspection	26 March 2012
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