



Lyndon School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104114
LEA Solihull
Inspection number 277075
Inspection dates 23 January 2006 to 24 January 2006
Reporting inspector John English AI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Daylesford Road
School category	Community		Solihull
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		West Midlands B92 8EJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 7433402
Number on roll	1259	Fax number	0121 7426138
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Jackie Montgomery
Date of previous inspection	28 February 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Selina Westwood

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 23 January 2006 - 24 January 2006	Inspection number 277075
------------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of five Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Lyndon is a large mixed comprehensive school with 1259 students, half of whom live in Solihull, and half in Birmingham. They previously attended 31 feeder primary schools. Most of the students are White British, with around 15% from a wide range of other backgrounds. The proportion of students speaking English as an additional language is just below the national average. Although the attainment of the students on entry to the school is broadly in line with the average, there is a higher than average proportion with some social disadvantages and with low levels of literacy. The proportion with specific learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. The school is oversubscribed, and most of the students who join at the beginning of Year 7 stay throughout their secondary schooling.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Lyndon is a good school which provides well for all its students, regardless of their background, so that they achieve well. The school believes that it is effective, and the inspectors agree. It has improved since the last inspection, and has the capacity to improve further. The senior managers' main priorities are improving standards of attainment and supporting the personal development of all the students. They ensure that the progress being made by the students in all subjects is carefully tracked so that any who are underachieving can be given additional support. Achievement in individual subjects ranges from good to very good, except in mathematics. In this subject, achievement is satisfactory, because the quality of teaching does not sufficiently engage the students and there are some weaknesses in leadership.

The students enjoy school and attendance is above average. They have a good understanding of the requirements for healthy living and feel safe at school. Most parents feel the school provides well for their children, but a small minority feel that behaviour is not good enough. Inspectors agree with this, but only in respect of a small minority of students in a few lessons, mostly in Years 7 to 9. This is often because the work in these lessons does not meet the needs of the students and does not engage them sufficiently. Higher-attaining students are usually given the same work as the rest of the class and are not challenged sufficiently. The majority of students behave well and have a very good attitude to learning, particularly in Years 10 and 11. The school provides good support to all students. It works exceptionally well in partnership with agencies outside the school to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils are included and make good progress. The curriculum and enrichment activities such as clubs and visits provide well for the needs of the students. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the behaviour of a minority of students in Years 7 to 9.
- Ensure that the work in all lessons meets the range of needs of the students, and stretches the higher-attaining students in Years 7 to 9.
- Raise standards in mathematics by improving the quality of teaching and subject leadership.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are broadly in line with national averages and this represents good achievement overall. By the end of Year 9, the students have made satisfactory progress in mathematics and science and good progress in English and most other subjects.

By the end of Year 11, the students' achievement has accelerated. Progress in most subjects is very good, putting the school in the top quarter of schools nationally for achievement in Years 10 and 11. Progress overall in mathematics is satisfactory.

The students make significantly better progress in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. This is because their attitude to learning has matured, their literacy skills have improved, and they are more motivated to learn. In addition, their teachers have higher expectations of what they can achieve. Most of the students achieve challenging targets. Higher-attaining students in Years 7 to 9 do not progress as well as they could if provided with more challenging work. Students with learning difficulties or disabilities achieve as well as their peers because of the additional support given to them by teachers, learning assistants and other agencies working in partnership with the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development is good. Students' enjoyment of school is seen in their good attendance and prompt arrival at lessons, despite the extended nature of the site. Most students behave well, work hard and display increasing independence. Vulnerable students develop well with the help and support of a range of professionals. However, a minority of students slow the learning of others through low-level disruption in some classes, mostly in Years 7 to 9. Students feel secure. Occasional racist incidents or bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively, often through the mediation of trained older students. Students accept considerable responsibilities, such as becoming prefects or school council members. The school council has considerable influence in shaping school life, for example by securing healthier school dinners. Awareness of how to lead a healthy lifestyle is high. The good development of basic and personal skills ensures pupils are prepared well for their future.

The wide range of experiences the school offers enables students to develop their social skills well and widens their appreciation of other cultures. They know right from wrong. Students benefit particularly from their close links with a Kenyan school. They have contributed to the wider community by raising substantial sums of money for a range of charities, both at home and abroad, through activities like non-uniform days and sponsored abseiling. Overall, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and account for the good achievement that students make across the school. In some subjects, for example English and history, teaching is consistently good or better because lessons interest the students and proceed at a brisk pace, with a variety of different activities. In a few subjects, for example in mathematics, teaching is less engaging because there is less variety and students often find the explanations of the ideas involved difficult to understand. However, students enjoy many lessons and make good progress in their personal development and subject knowledge. Both teachers and students have a clear understanding of target grades

and how well they are progressing. Students clearly understand what they need to do to improve their work. This is accelerating progress and raising standards in tests and examinations. Teaching and learning are best in Years 10 and 11 where students are highly motivated by well-planned work and examination preparation that accurately matches their varying needs.

In a small number of lessons in Years 7–9 teachers' plans do not take sufficient account of the wide range of ability within the class. As a result, a few students find the work too difficult or too easy and become frustrated. This leads in some to misbehaviour that distracts the teacher and interrupts the good progress of the class. However, the good relationships that exist between teachers and students in most lessons lead to a fruitful atmosphere within which the students can flourish.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and provides a good match to student need. Statutory requirements are met. There is good provision for literacy and ICT. The policy for supporting improved numeracy skills across the curriculum is good. There is a well-balanced programme linking personal, social and health education with citizenship and religious education. Good use is made of theme days in Years 7 to 9 to extend business and community awareness. Enterprise and financial skills are also systematically developed. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 makes good provision for vocational study, including a range of Applied GCSE subjects. There are good alternative courses for the small numbers of students for whom the mainstream provision is inappropriate.

Strong links with local colleges, employers, community groups and outside agencies enhance the learning and personal development of all students, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities. The range of extra clubs and activities available for students is good.

These include a good variety of sports activities, general interest clubs, subject revision classes and visits in this country and abroad.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support the school provides for its students is good. Health and safety and child protection procedures are in place and are well known to staff. Instances of bullying or racism are dealt with promptly and effectively. The school functions as a calm and orderly community. Students value the support they have from adults, particularly tutors. Good quality guidance on careers education is provided from Year 7 onwards, so students are prepared well by the time they leave school. Arrangements for transfer from primary schools are good and help students to settle in well.

The Student Support Centre enables vulnerable students to improve their experience of education. Excellent partnerships with other agencies, such as local colleges, the

police and other social services, ensure all students have the opportunity to develop their potential.

Effective tracking systems ensure that when students underachieve, this is identified at an early stage, and extra support provided.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good because the headteacher, well supported by senior leaders and governors, provides clear direction for the school. Improvement since the last inspection is good, with all identified weaknesses having been addressed. Recent changes in the structure of the school's leadership team and changes to the governing body have strengthened the school's capacity to continue to raise standards.

The school's improvement planning is detailed, and securely focused on raising standards and promoting the personal development of students. Well-established systems for checking on the quality of provision enable leaders to have a good awareness of the strengths and areas for development within the school. Where weakness is identified, senior leaders act decisively to resolve the issue. The school seeks the views of students and parents to improve the quality of provision where possible, for example introducing healthy eating alternatives for school dinners

Most subject departments are very well led, and good support is in place to enable middle leaders to develop appropriate skills and strategies.

At present, there is no substantive head of mathematics, which has led to a lack of direction in some aspects of the work of the department, particularly the improvement of teaching and learning. The headteacher has personally provided good support to the acting head of department while a permanent solution is sought. School leaders use data effectively to review progress, and effective systems are in place to support the use of data in tracking student and subject performance. Monitoring of teaching and learning is established routine, and enables senior managers to gain a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in provision. However, it is not based closely enough on clear and consistent expectations to ensure rapid enough improvements. This is particularly evident in those lessons that are still satisfactory rather than good.

Day to day management and financial management are good, and there have been significant improvements to the learning environment, ICT resources and staffing levels within a modest budget. The school achieves good value for money.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We would especially like to thank those students who answered our many questions, in lessons, around the school, and in formal meetings. I would also like to thank the head-girl and head-boy for coming to meet me at the beginning and giving me a very useful introduction to the school. You are right to be proud of how the school helps you in your academic and personal development. We also think that Lyndon is a good school.

You enjoy school and have very good relationships with staff and we know that you get a lot of support from them. You feel safe and all have someone that you can turn to if experiencing difficulties. It was good to hear that there is very little bullying and, if it does occur, staff take swift action to stop it. The school takes good care of you and guides you well.

The curriculum at the school is good. In Years 10 and 11 in particular it caters very well for the many different needs that you have. There is a good range of clubs, trips and residential visits on offer. Most of the parents who responded to our questionnaire are pleased with the education the school provides.

Your headteacher and staff are working hard to offer you a good education. We saw many good lessons and understand why you find many of them interesting and enjoyable. In most lessons you are given work that challenges you and prepares you well for tests and examinations. You have clear examination targets and you understand how to improve your work so that you attain your grades. You behave very well around the school but in a few lessons the misbehaviour of a small minority of individuals distracts the teacher and other members of the class. This is often because they find the work too hard or too easy. We have asked the school to ensure teachers prepare work that stretches each one of you.

We believe that you are being well prepared for all aspects of your further education when you leave Lyndon School, and for your future life at work and leisure.

We all wish you well for the future.