



# Sir John Leman High School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 124817  
**LEA** SUFFOLK LEA  
**Inspection number** 281812  
**Inspection dates** 11 January 2006 to 12 January 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr. John Mitcheson LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Ringsfield Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		NR34 9PG
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	13 to 18		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01502713223
<b>Number on roll</b>	1362	<b>Fax number</b>	01502716646
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr. Hugh Jones
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr. S Common

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
13 to 18	11 January 2006 - 12 January 2006	281812

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Sir John Leman High School is a large 13 - 18 comprehensive school with 1065 students in the main school and 297 in the sixth form, drawn from the local market town and a large rural catchment area. The majority of pupils require transport to get to and from school. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is average. There is an equal number of boys and girls, almost all of whom are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is above average. It has had specialist Technology college status since 2000. A new headteacher has been in post since September 2005. It has community sports facilities on site and provides a range of learning opportunities beyond the school day.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Sir John Leman High School is a good school. It prides itself in meeting the needs of a wide range of students from different backgrounds and is well respected by parents. The majority of boys and girls achieve well in all key stages. Results in tests and examinations in 2005 fell slightly compared with the previous year's but they remained in line with what we would expect to find in other schools. GCSE results in English and science are notably high. The school's evaluation shows that it knows most of its strengths and weaknesses. The inspectors agree that it is a good school. It has tackled the issues raised in the last inspection and has made rapid progress since the appointment of a new headteacher. Most students enjoy school and are keen to learn. They are supported well by dedicated staff and the school's external partners with whom it works. Student behaviour is good, they feel safe and know who to go to if they have concerns. A significant proportion of students choose not to attend school regularly, but the school is working hard to improve this. Specialist Technology status has allowed the school to improve many aspects of teaching and learning, particularly the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in lessons and better social areas for students. The vast majority of teaching is good and, in a few lessons, exceptional. Not all teachers make effective use of performance data to identify individuals and groups of students at risk of under-achieving. School leaders, particularly the new headteacher, have demonstrated good capacity to improve. Students and parents comment favourably about the recent improvements. The school knows what it needs to do to improve but it has not prioritised the actions needed to raise achievement further. The school provides good value for money.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

Sixth form provision is good and is a strength of the school. Students told inspectors that they enjoy their studies and value the opportunities to contribute to school life by as members of the school council, bus escorts and mentors for younger students. Sixth form teaching is good, with outstanding features. Teachers make lessons interesting and encourage students to ask questions and join in discussions. At times the heavy workload across several subjects requires better co-ordination. There is a wide range of vocational and advanced level courses, but no provision for religious education or recreational activities. The sixth form is well led and managed.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Strengthen its ability to accurately judge its own performance and prioritise the key issues needed to raise achievement further.
- Maintain its focus on raising and maintaining student attendance in the school.
- Improve its use of performance data to identify individuals and groups of students who are not achieving as well as they should be, and take appropriate action to improve this.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Overall achievement is good. Last year's results in Year 9 tests showed a slight dip because the classes that took the tests in 2005 had an exceptionally high proportion of students with learning difficulties and a small group of boys did not do as well as they should have done. However, the majority of students made good progress and standards remained in line with expectations. The school set challenging targets and met them in science but just failed to meet them in English and mathematics. It has taken steps to tackle this under achievement and has begun to improve its system of identifying which students require additional support. Pupils make good progress in Years 10 and 11. The school sets challenging targets and came close to meeting them in 2005. GCSE results improved slightly and are average overall, and higher than average in English, science, history and food technology. Results in physical education and religious studies were well above average but below average in art and design technology. The school is working hard to raise expectations and performance in those subjects where students do not achieve as highly. Sixth form students make good progress and achieved above average standards in national tests in 2004 and 2005. Students with statements of special educational need make good progress as a result of effectively targeted support and care provided by teaching assistants.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 2**

Student behaviour is good, and has improved because the school is insisting on much higher standards. Staff, students and parents speak highly of the positive feel in the school and the dramatic fall in exclusions is a testimony to systems that are working. Students feel safe and secure because of these improvements and there are very few incidents of bullying. Students enjoy their lessons as they are pleasant, friendly and the relations between teachers, students and staff are good. The school is beginning to have some success in attracting back into school the disaffected students who do not attend school regularly. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision is satisfactory. Moral guidance is strong and students are taking increased responsibility for the environment in which they learn. The school council has influenced the choice of new school uniform, some healthy food available at lunchtimes and ensuring drinking water is freely available. The school does not provide an act of daily collective worship or use tutorial time as effectively as it could do to promote spiritual and cultural understanding. Many students take part in sporting and musical activities provided beyond the school day. However sixth form students do not have regular, programmed opportunities to be physically active. Sixth form students are actively involved in local charitable work but younger students have little contact with their local community. Students' literacy, numeracy and computer skills are well developed to support their economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Sixth form teaching is often exceptionally good. Students learn best when they are actively involved in lessons. This was observed in paired, practical work in drama and science, in individual creative writing tasks, and through class discussion. Teachers' subject knowledge is good, relationships are strong and they have high expectations of students. ICT is used very well by teachers but there are fewer opportunities for students to use their own ICT skills in lessons. At times, when teachers' planning and questioning are not adequately matched to students' learning needs, or when lessons fail to stimulate, students lose interest which can lead to low level disruption in lessons. The school has invested in programmes to improve the quality of teaching and learning, but these have not yet had sufficient impact to bring all the teaching up to the standard of the very best. There is insufficient planning by subject teachers to meet the needs of students with learning difficulties when no learning assistants are present. Assessment of examination coursework is thorough, but the quality of day to day marking in exercise books is inconsistent. There is little evidence, for example, of written feedback to students to help them raise the standard of their work. Not all teachers regularly review student performance data to assess exactly how well each student is doing, or to spot the early signs of under achievement in different classes.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

Curriculum provision is good and meets statutory requirements. The school has a distinctive programme of vocational and personal development courses matched to the needs of most students in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. This involves links with a number of other local schools and colleges. All students study ICT and a modern foreign language in Year 9. Personal, social and health education, and citizenship help to inform the views of all students. They benefit from good advice before selecting Key Stage 4 courses from a wide range of academic and vocational options. Students are offered a range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport which are enthusiastically taken up by both boys and girls. There is scope for further provision of non-sporting activities to occupy the interest of students during busy lunchtimes. An alternative curriculum programme for a small proportion of more challenging students is a particular strength of the school. Sixth form students benefit from a broad curriculum, including a range of academic and vocational courses.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Students are in a more safe and supervised environment now that they remain on-site during lunchtimes. Sixth form students play an important role in supervising bus journeys and by acting as counsellors for younger pupils. Child protection procedures are understood and a good number of staff have received specialised training. There are appropriate health and safety procedures in place. Older students are given clear guidance about how to improve their work and know the targets they are working towards, but many younger ones are unaware of their targets or how well they are doing. Students are reasonably well prepared for the world of work through individual careers guidance coupled with a work experience placement and additional work experience for those studying vocational courses. Guidance on career options and further studies provided by school and connexions staff is satisfactory. A dedicated base for students with statements of special educational need provides good support through expert teaching staff and learning support assistants. Support for special needs students in classes where there is not a learning support assistant present is satisfactory.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 2**

Leadership and management of the school are good. The new headteacher has given the school a renewed impetus. Teachers report that the school is reinvigorated and morale has improved. It is too early to assess the impact of this renewed vigour on raising standards further. However, he is fully supported by pupils, parents, staff and governors. Subject leaders have developed good plans designed to raise standards, and they meet regularly with senior staff to report on their work. Governance of the school is effective. Governors have been instrumental in appointing key staff capable of raising standards in the school and providing challenge and support for the new headteacher. The impact of specialist Technology status is evident in the widespread use of ICT across all subjects and the improved classrooms and social areas. The school's systems for evaluating the effectiveness of its work are satisfactory. It has sought the views of pupils, parents and the local community and its evaluation document is largely accurate, though too long. Strategic planning shows the school is striving to improve on many fronts. However, too many areas for improvement are identified and the top priorities are not as clearly defined as they could be. The new headteacher has already set the school on a clear course for improvement and ensured good capacity to improve further.





## Inspection judgements

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

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	4	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

Earlier this week I visited your school with four other inspectors. Throughout our visit your behaviour was good and you made us feel very welcome. We were pleased with the way you helped us find our way around school, giving your views and answering our questions. I was particularly impressed with the school council and the way all members were willing to give their honest, accurate views of the school. Sir John Leman High School is a good school. Most of you enjoy being members of the school, you attend regularly and show positive attitudes towards learning. You show respect towards the headteacher and his staff and appreciate what they do for you in lessons and in activities outside of the school day. Many of you commented on the recent improvements in the school, particularly behaviour. You can help to make this even better by making sure you and your friends adhere to the new behaviour policy and reminding others of what the expectations are in lessons, at breaks and lunchtimes. We have asked the school to make some further improvements: - We believe it's essential to be in school if you want to achieve success. So, we've asked senior teachers to continue with their plans to improve and maintain attendance. - We have asked teachers to make regular assessments of your work so they can track your performance more effectively in all subjects and provide you with additional support if you need it. - We have asked the headteacher and his leadership team to prioritise the key areas for development and take the necessary action to raise achievement of all students. You can play a part in the plans the school has for the future by feeding your views into the school council, and asking them to share them with the school leadership team. Once again, thank you for your kind welcome, we wish you all well.