



Langley Grammar School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110101
Local Authority Slough
Inspection number 288591
Inspection dates 6–7 March 2007
Reporting inspector Lynn Bappa

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

Type of school	Grammar (selective)	School address	Reddington Drive
School category	Foundation		Langley
Age range of pupils	11–18		Slough SL3 7QS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01753 598300
Number on roll (school)	1035	Fax number	01753 598302
Number on roll (6th form)	284		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr K Richardson
		Headteacher	Miss H Clarke
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 2003		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–18	6–7 March 2007	288591

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a selective, co-educational grammar school with a large sixth form. The proportion of students entitled to free school meals is smaller than average, as is the number identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Over two-thirds of the school's population are from minority ethnic groups, with just over a half coming from Asian/British-Indian backgrounds. The school gained mathematics and computing specialist status in 2004. It holds a variety of awards, including the Healthy Schools silver award and Sports Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Langley Grammar is an outstandingly effective school that deserves its very good reputation. As one parent commented, 'We feel privileged that our children are able to attend such a wonderful school'.

A key factor in the school's success is the promotion of equality and the concern for the individual. This is a school where every child really does matter. As a result, students' achievements are outstanding and they reach very high standards in tests and examinations at the end of Years 9, 11 and 13. Performance in mathematics is particularly strong, with an exceptionally high proportion of students at age 14 and 16 gaining the highest levels or grades. Students do not do quite as well in English, although standards are still significantly above average. Senior leaders have rightly identified this as an area for development and the school's improvement plan provides a comprehensive framework for raising attainment in English. Despite the very high standards, the school is constantly trying to drive them even higher. These results have not been achieved at the expense of students' social development. Academic success is only part of the picture. Students' personal development and well-being are also outstanding. They show greater than average confidence and maturity. The excellent care students receive, as well as the excellent teaching and curriculum play a key role in students' personal and academic achievements. Students have a zest for learning and display excellent attitudes to all aspects of school life.

Leadership and management are outstanding at all levels. The school has no significant weaknesses and has an excellent capacity to improve further. While academic achievement is a very strong focus of this school, this is not at the expense of the students' personal development. Staff, parents and students are rightly proud of this aspect of the work of the school.

The school's specialist status in mathematics and computing has a significant impact on students' achievement and the wider life of the school. Standards in mathematics are particularly high. Teaching is enhanced by very good use of interactive whiteboards and students' learning is promoted through the virtual learning environment. The school has also extended its community provision and developed excellent and supportive links with several local schools.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding sixth form. Students are offered a rich and varied curriculum and are very well supported, both personally and academically. Retention rates are excellent, with almost all Year 11 students staying on to the sixth form. Standards are exceptionally high with a very high proportion of students achieving the highest grades of A and B. Sixth form students make excellent progress during their time in the school. Those who join Langley from other schools settle quickly and achieve as well as their classmates. Almost all students leave the school to study in higher education, with very many being accepted into prestigious universities.

Teaching and learning are excellent. Students speak very highly of their sixth form experiences and say they feel fortunate to be educated in such a stimulating atmosphere. They are well equipped with the skills for independent learning and respond well to the academic challenges their teachers inspire.

Relationships between students and with their teachers are excellent and there is a vibrant community feeling among the student body. Students benefit greatly from the wide-ranging enrichment programme. This provides excellent opportunities for them to develop personally and provide service to the school, the local community and global projects. For example, sixth formers mentor younger students in a nearby school in order to help raise their academic aspirations. One sixth form student spoke passionately about her involvement in the Fulcrum Challenge. She, along with several of her classmates, raised the money to travel to India where they helped lay the foundations for a children's home.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve results in English to the exceptionally high levels reached in mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Standards are exceptionally high in all key stages and are improving over time. Students make very good progress and their achievements are outstanding, both academically and personally. This is because the school's supportive ethos motivates students to perform to the best of their ability. The standards of the students on entry are significantly above average in mathematics and science but are less strong in English, reflecting the very large proportion with English as an additional language. The school builds on students' prior attainment very successfully through excellent teaching which encourages them to think for themselves, and by creating a community eager to learn.

Standards in the national tests for 14 year olds are exceptionally high. Performance in mathematics is particularly strong with almost all students gaining the highest grade. In English, not as many reach these levels, although they are making excellent progress in relation to their lower starting points. Standards at 16 are exceptionally high, with over two-thirds achieving five or more A*-A grades. Despite these very high standards, the school is constantly trying to drive them even higher and regularly exceeds its own challenging targets. In 2006, for example, the percentage of students gaining A*-A grades rose, and the AS results in Year 12 improved significantly.

Students of all ethnic groups and social backgrounds, as well as those with learning difficulties and disabilities, make excellent progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students are very proud of their school and enjoy the activities it offers. They are growing into mature and responsible young adults and are very well prepared for their future lives. Relationships are positive and there is a strong community feel. Students report that bullying is rare and is sorted out quickly. Students feel safe because 'there are always teachers around to help and take care of you'. Behaviour in and around the school is excellent and staff deal firmly with the very few reported incidents of anti-social behaviour. Attendance rates are high. There are excellent and wide-ranging opportunities for students to take on responsibilities. Students take these responsibilities seriously, as is evident in their charitable fundraising work and contributions to the community. The school council has an active voice on school matters and has succeeded in changing aspects of school life.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Students develop a clear sense of what is right and wrong and show a high degree of respect for others. Cultural awareness is very well developed through a wide range of high quality extra-curricular opportunities, including many visits both within the United Kingdom and beyond. There is a strong commitment to racial equality from both staff and students.

Students show a growing understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle, developing a particularly good awareness of the benefits of exercise. They enjoy playing sport and are keen to be involved in competitions with other schools. The take-up for extra-curricular sport is very good and students gain success locally and regionally.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

High quality teaching enables the students to make excellent progress in their studies and in their personal development. The ethos of the school means that the students are very keen to do well and that they want to learn. They have very good relationships with their teachers and show high levels of enjoyment and interest in their work. Students feel well supported by their teachers because they readily provide additional help and further explanations. As one student commented, 'If you don't understand they will give up their time to make sure you do. If you are already good at the work, they will praise and encourage you to do even better.' Teachers ask well-chosen questions to deepen the understanding of their students and work with them to help them reflect on how well they have met their learning objectives. Students have a good understanding of the level they are working at, how well they are progressing, and what they need to do in order to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The curriculum meets the needs of all groups of students very effectively, and places a strong emphasis on the development of well-rounded individuals. In Years 10 and 11, the curriculum provides a wide range of options and students are given very clear guidance about their choice of courses. There are excellent programmes for the promotion of personal development and these make a significant contribution to students' understanding of healthy and safe lifestyles and to their personal development. The school's specialist status in mathematics and computing adds a further ingredient to a very rich mix of opportunities.

The curriculum is enriched by excellent activities outside lessons. The huge enjoyment of these activities shows that they contribute significantly to the students' personal development and are very much appreciated by them. One parent wrote 'My child has settled in easily and quickly and taken advantage of many of the extra-curricular activities now on offer in the new sports hall'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school provides an extremely caring and supportive environment where students can flourish as individuals. Students and many parents commented positively on this aspect of the school's work. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust and reviewed on a regular basis. The school is strengthening links with parents and communicates effectively with families. There are good links with feeder primary schools so that students settle quickly into Year 7. As one parent commented, 'The transition was seamless, even though our son knew no-one else before he started. This was down to the care and attention during the induction day and the start of the term.' There is tremendous commitment from staff and sixth formers to ensure that all students maximise their educational and social opportunities. Younger students, for example, benefit from being mentored by sixth formers. Careers advice is excellent and ensures that students are very well informed about the options available to them for the next stage of education and working life.

School leaders make excellent use of data to track the progress of students in different year groups and subjects. Students know their targets and how to improve. Heads of Year, tutors and subject teachers work closely to provide a comprehensive package of support. Students were quick to say that this has a positive impact on improving their work.

Students with learning difficulties and disabilities are included very well in all aspects of school life. Successful booster groups enhance learning in English in Years 7 and 8, enabling students with English as an additional language to become confident and competent learners.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The headteacher's caring and reflective leadership is highly effective and has had a major impact on the school's excellent ethos and high standards. She is supported by very able senior managers who provide clarity of direction that is first class. Together with heads of year, heads of faculty and the new professional tutor team, they have accurate knowledge of teachers' skills and use performance data well to identify where improvements should be made. As a result, the quality of teaching is outstanding.

The excellent personal development of the students is a result of strong pastoral leadership at all levels. A strong feature of this leadership is the way in which students know that each of them matters. This is not just for their academic achievement but also for their growth as responsible and well-rounded young citizens.

The school knows itself well and demonstrates excellent planning for improvement. Issues relating to the last inspection have been tackled successfully. Governors have a very good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and provide a very effective balance of support and challenge. The school is not complacent about its many successes and is actively engaged in helping students to achieve even more highly. The opinions of parents and students are always valued and frequently acted upon. The school works very well with a very wide range of partners, including local businesses and neighbouring schools. There are robust systems in place to ensure efficient management on a day-to-day basis.

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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
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Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

On behalf of the inspectors who visited your school recently, I should like to thank you for the warm welcome that you extended to us. We very much enjoyed discussing with you the work that you were doing and looking at the progress that you were making. You talked enthusiastically about how much you gained from being students at Langley Grammar School. We thought you would like a summary of the inspection findings, but also hope that you and your parents will take the opportunity to read the whole report.

You attend an outstanding school and, in no small way, you help to make it such a good place to be. This is because you work hard and enjoy learning. You do very well indeed in your tests and examinations and make excellent progress during your time in the school. However, it is not just your academic achievements that are outstanding. It is also because you have first-rate attitudes to all that the school offers and play a significant part in the wider life of the school and community. You are developing the skills needed to be excellent participants in higher education, the world of work and in adult life. Yours is an improving school, even though it already achieves extremely high standards. The headteacher and staff lead the school very well indeed and take great care to check how well you are doing. Your teachers help you to develop a love of learning and work very hard to make sure that lessons challenge and motivate you.

We do not think that your school has any significant weaknesses but have asked the headteacher to continue using the school's improvement plan to raise standards in English to match the exceptionally high standards you achieve in mathematics.

With very best wishes for the future.

Dr Lynn BappaLead inspector