

# Lytchett Minster School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113863
<b>Local Authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	289749
<b>Inspection date</b>	1 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Martyn Rhowbotham HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	979
6th form	221
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ray Griffin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stuart Clark
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2002
<b>School address</b>	Lytchett Minster Poole BH16 6JD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01202 622413
<b>Fax number</b>	01202 621230

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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Lytchett Minster School is a moderate to large oversubscribed comprehensive school set in beautiful grounds on the outskirts of the village of Lytchett Minster. A very high proportion of students are White British. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including statements of special educational needs, is at the national average. The school gained arts college status in 2001. A serious fire in June 2000 resulted in the creation of a split-site school, with replacement accommodation being housed in a mobile 'village' of 22 classrooms a quarter of a mile from the main site.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Lytchett Minster School is a good school, with some outstanding features. Despite the serious and ongoing difficulties with accommodation and the layout of the school site made necessary by the fire in June 2000, everyone in the school has worked tirelessly to ensure that a good standard of education remains the top priority. Parents are supportive of the school and appreciate the efforts made to minimise the disruption caused by the poor and disparate accommodation. One parent commented, 'The lack of progress on the buildings seems to be having little effect on my daughter and she has no complaints'.

Students make consistently good progress throughout the main school in most subjects. Their attitudes to learning and enthusiasm are good and are built upon and developed throughout their time at Lytchett Minster. Standards achieved in national tests at the end of Year 9 are consistently above average. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grade C or above is slightly above the national average, and well above when passes in mathematics and English are included. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also do well as a result of very good support.

Students' personal development and well-being are good. Students are proud of their school and the House system works very well to bring about a feeling of teamwork and belonging. Students enjoy school and make a very positive contribution to the running of the school and to the community. Most enjoy healthy lifestyles, but feel that the price of healthy options in the canteen is too high. Teaching and learning are largely good across the school, which has recently been designated a 'training school' for teachers. Despite the poor and sometimes cramped accommodation, students enjoy most of their lessons and are determined to do their best. In most lessons, they behave well, respond well to the range of challenging activities they are given and are proud of their achievements, but occasionally some low-level disruption occurs in lessons lower down the school.

Managers ensure that the curriculum is reviewed constantly. The range of courses is very broad. Because of the outstanding guidance available to students, they are able to take the courses that best meet their needs and aspirations. Students place great importance on the outstanding range of additional activities such as clubs, sports and trips that clearly are a very important part of life at Lytchett Minster School. Arts college status has been particularly beneficial in this respect.

The care, guidance and support of students are outstanding. The House system provides an excellent focus for ensuring that students' pastoral needs are known and addressed. Outstanding academic guidance at all levels is underpinned by the rigorous monitoring of students' progress. Students feel safe in school and they care for each other. Bullying is rare and is dealt with quickly by staff.

It is to the credit of managers and staff at all levels that they do not allow the large amount of building work that is still going on to disrupt the smooth running of the school or the focus on the care of students and their progress, and there is a warm and happy atmosphere in the school. Governors and senior leaders set high standards and expectations. The self-evaluation carried out prior to the inspection by the school is largely accurate and the school deserves its good reputation in the community. It has good capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

### Grade: 3

The sixth form is satisfactory in terms of achievement and standards and the school has ambitions to increase the proportion of higher grades at A level. Sixth form students are a real asset to the school and value their time there enormously. They act as excellent role models. They receive excellent support from managers and teachers and, in return, their support for students lower down the school through schemes such as mentoring and paired reading is outstanding.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve higher level pass rates in the sixth form.
- Raise the quality of all teaching to that of the best, particularly to ensure that low level disruption in a small minority of lessons is tackled.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

#### Grade for sixth form: 3

Achievement is good and standards are above average in the main school. Students entering the school have good attitudes to learning and they make consistently good progress in Years 7 to 9. As a result, their performance in national tests at the end of Year 9 is good and consistently above the national average. Higher-attaining students and students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do well. In Years 10 and 11, students also make good progress. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C is slightly above the national average. The number of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, is above the proportion found nationally, as is the percentage of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to G. Students make satisfactory progress in the sixth form and standards are broadly average.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

#### Grade for sixth form: 2

Students' personal development and well-being are good throughout the school. They feel safe and they act sensibly and safely around the school, which is especially important with the large amount of building work taking place on the site. Students enjoy their lessons and school as a whole. They behave well in most lessons although there is some low-level disruption in a minority of lessons. Behaviour around the school is good. Students are polite and clearly proud of their school. Bullying is rare, although there are a few instances when low-level bullying takes place on the 400 metre journey between the main site and the 'village' site. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and is catered for well by house assemblies, citizenship lessons and the wide range of additional clubs and activities available to them. Students make an admirable contribution to local and national charities and, particularly in the sixth form, they are very aware of the positive role the school plays in the local community. Students know what constitutes healthy eating, but healthy food in the canteen is expensive and this limits its take-up. Students develop good basic skills and this, combined with their polite and positive attitudes towards other people, ensures they develop good skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Teaching and learning are good overall; the sampled lessons seen during the inspection confirmed the school's own monitoring analysis, in which most are good but some are satisfactory. Students have positive attitudes to learning and many lessons make good use of this to ensure students make as much progress as possible. The better lessons are planned thoroughly and there is a good range of learning activities that students enjoy and gain a lot from. Behaviour is good in these lessons because of this enjoyment and a determination from students to do as well as they can. In the less effective lessons, students are sometimes not actively involved in their learning.

### Curriculum and other activities

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The curriculum in the main school and in the sixth form is outstanding. The school offers a very broad yet balanced curriculum which has responded to students' needs and their requests. There has been an appropriate increase in the range of vocational qualifications and these are very successful in meeting the needs and aspirations of students, especially in the sixth form where these courses have very high status. Some students access a radically different curriculum to meet their individual needs. This involves practical vocational work at a local college and extended work experience. Good intervention and support from the Student Support Centre in Year 7 and throughout the main school enables students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, amongst others, to make good progress. The needs of gifted and talented and higher-attaining students are met via the flexible options system. Students appreciate fully the very wide range of exciting enrichment activities which are well attended. The arts college status has enhanced learning experiences for students through the extensive programme of activities both for students and the wider community. Vocational courses in the sixth form are very successful.

### Care, guidance and support

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Care, support and guidance for all students throughout the school are outstanding. A robust system supports both achievement and personal development, and the individual needs of students are met with tailored programmes of support. Students' academic progress is monitored well and targets are regularly monitored and discussed with students. Most students have a clear understanding of their own learning and understand what they need to do to reach their targets. Students' views are taken into account both formally and informally and, as a result, students feel valued and listened to. Heads of House manage their tutors in their 'Teams of Ten+' well and tutors monitor and support their students effectively. The House system is a great strength in the school and helps generate a real sense of belonging. Students make informed choices on their future studies through the highly effective guidance they receive.

Sixth formers speak extremely highly of the support they receive and how this helps them prepare for their future.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher and his senior leadership team is strong, with a clear focus on improvement. Their clarity of vision and the development of a sense of community have led to sustained good progress and a positive climate for learning throughout the school. Students' good progress and their positive attitudes to learning owe much to the high quality leadership and management across the school, including in the sixth form. Many aspects of school life are tailored to the needs and requests of the students. The self-evaluation carried out prior to the inspection was accurate. Subject leaders have a secure view of strengths and weaknesses of their departments and use this to develop staff through accurately identifying and meeting professional development needs. Governors take an active role in school life and rigorously challenge the school to improve. The governors and the senior team have managed very well during the difficulties brought about by the fire and it is testament to the attitudes of staff and students that progress continues to be good. The safeguarding of students meets statutory requirements; however, the recommended Criminal Records Bureau checks for governors are in hand but not yet completed.

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## Annex A

## 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	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
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	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
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>	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
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>	1	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	1

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**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	2	
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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
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

May 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Lytchett Minster School, Poole BH16 6JD

As you know, we recently inspected your school. You possibly saw us around the school and some of you came to meetings with us, where you were very good at telling us about your work and your progress. You also told us what you like about school and what you thought could be improved. You were very polite and helpful during the inspection and were particularly good at giving us directions when we got lost on our way to the 'village'! You all made an important contribution to the inspection and we would like to thank you very much for that.

The school is good with some outstanding features. Its main strengths are:

- the progress you achieve in most subjects
- your good attitudes to learning and your enthusiasm for school
- the subjects offered and the additional activities such as performing arts and clubs
- the way it cares for you
- your generally good behaviour.

So as to improve further, the school needs to:

- ensure the small amount of low-level disruption in a few lessons doesn't spoil your learning
- challenge students in the sixth form to do even better by getting higher grades.

You can help a great deal by attending all of the time and continuing to behave well.

Thank you again for all your help in the inspection and we wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Martyn Rhowbotham Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools