

Lammas School

Independent School

Inspection report

DfES Registration Number	8916016
Unique Reference Number	122937
Inspection number	301546
Inspection dates	11-12 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Marianick Ellender-Gelé HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Lammas school is a co-educational independent day school providing education for pupils aged four to sixteen years of age. The school is situated in Sutton-in-Ashfield and pupils come mostly from Sutton, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Alfreton and a wide range of villages further afield. The school aims to promote high moral and cultural values and to create a happy and secure environment where the needs of the individual are recognised and respected. There is a strong expectation that pupils are at this school to access an enriching curriculum which enables them to achieve their academic potential and develop into confident and responsible young adults by the time they move on to college or employment. The proprietors extend the school's resources by using the facilities in the local community, such as the library. The school opened in 1981.

Evaluation of the school

The overall quality of education provided at Lammas school is satisfactory. Almost all of the regulations are met and the provision has been improved. The spiritual, moral and social development of pupils is good and their cultural development is satisfactory. Behaviour is good. Staff care for their pupils and the small class sizes facilitate individual academic support and good preparation for examinations. There are, however, limitations in resources and the tight accommodation restricts some learning activities.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory. It includes citizenship, careers and religious education together with personal, social and health education (PSHE). Younger pupils study relevant topics supported by well-devised schemes of work. Published schemes and materials prepared by the teachers are used effectively. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their knowledge with a strong focus on their literacy and mathematical skills. In the senior school schemes of work are based on preparation for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations and provide an effective framework to promote progression in learning. Subjects, such as business and communication systems, and mathematics, prepare young people well for future studies and develop their economic well-being. Careers education includes general awareness of pupils' aspirations and they have access to Connexions

advisers to discuss progression routes. There are, however, some serious limitations in provision often due to lack of facilities. These include: the limited use of information and communication technology (ICT) as a teaching and learning tool, limited creative and aesthetic work, poor provision for design and technology and for physical education (PE). Pupils can access some additional activities, such as dance, music and Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) award schemes, but there is no monitoring of participation in extra curricular learning therefore the school does not have a clear view of the impact of its provision on pupils' personal skills and they are not given sufficient responsibility to organise activities for themselves. This was a concern raised by many parents and older pupils. Although students complete examination work successfully, tight scheduling allows little opportunity for enrichment activities within and outside the classroom. This is a pity in view of the school's aim.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. However, there is no clear direction to senior staff to monitor provision, which might aid improvement, and teachers have limited access to professional development, working in isolation with no regular appraisal of their work. Consequently, the quality of lesson planning and teaching is inconsistent. Some teaching is good. In the best lessons pupils are kept actively involved and teachers ensure that all maintain concentration. In these effective lessons, challenge is high and pupils are stimulated and inquisitive. The work achieved is then of a high standard. In less successful lessons, pupils are not sufficiently involved in activities and do too much listening. In some cases, teaching is unsatisfactory because of poor organisation, insufficient feedback and lack of precise instructions on how to practise skills. Opportunities to take initiatives are limited. Assessment against the GCSE criteria in Years 10 and 11 is good and teachers have a thorough understanding of these requirements. However, pupils are not always given specific information on how to achieve higher grades. In other years, there is limited use of assessment to help pupils do better and marking is cursory. End of year assessments are made for all pupils, but are not yet set against the previous assessments to track progress over time.

Overall pupils make satisfactory progress. The school makes good use of small group sizes and pupils report that staff are very willing to help them. This was observed in most lessons and relationships are good. Support, often one-to-one, encourages progress and pupils try hard, show respect for the learning needs of others and, when given the opportunity, high levels of engagement in their lessons. Progress for pupils with moderate learning difficulties is satisfactory but some classroom assistants have had insufficient training in key aspects of learning, such as dyslexia, and, consequently, individual support is not always effective enough. The school achieves good examination results, above the national average, but not enough use is made of centralised data to represent accurately the school's contribution to pupils' achievement and use this to help in the management of teaching and learning.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and their cultural development is satisfactory. The provision for cultural diversity is insufficiently emphasised across the curriculum. Religious education provides good knowledge of the world's major religions. However, opportunities for pupils to visit places of worship for non-Christian religions or to meet believers of those religions are limited.

Pupils enjoy coming to school, attend regularly and show positive attitudes towards their work. They bring to school a high level of motivation to work hard and make the best of opportunities offered to them. Their behaviour is good overall but some pupils are concerned that incidents of bullying are not always addressed. However, most pupils feel that in case of difficulty they can seek help. Many are ready to take on greater responsibilities in their learning and in the life of the school and would welcome opportunities to do so. Inspectors agree that more could be done to trust pupils and give them a voice. Pupils raise funds to contribute to some charitable causes. They grow in self-confidence and display high self-esteem. The recent emphasis on promoting good citizenship is making pupils aware of some of the public institutions that are likely to play a significant role in their lives. However, the status of PSHE as a subject is low and the objectives of this course have not been sufficiently shared with pupils to explain the relevance to their health, safety and general well-being.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The overall provision for welfare, health and safety of pupils is good. The school has a good range of policies and practices, although some require updating and staff have not had recent training on child protection and first aid. Teachers are diligent about the safety of all pupils and risk assessments are carefully made. The school has not completed an assessment under the Disability Discrimination Act, although it successfully provides for pupils who have temporary mobility issues.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Checks with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) for the suitability of staff to work with children are now carried out for all those employed in the school and all long-serving staff have been subject to the appropriate checks. The school has good procedures for confirming the background of staff prior to them taking up appointment, although medical checks are not always carried out. The proprietors take a keen interest in the day-to-day organising and running the school. Roles and responsibilities concerning the evaluation of teaching, assessment and the curriculum are unclear and staff do not have job descriptions or appraisal reviews.

School's premises and accommodation

The school is small and, as a listed building, developments can be difficult. However some improvements have been made in English and in the science laboratory. Many classrooms have bright displays. Nevertheless pupils' learning is restricted because they cannot easily develop their experimenting skills in science, or their design, craft and technology skills. The school makes some use of local facilities, such as the library and the church hall, but possibilities to access physical education facilities are not exploited fully. A room is provided for pupils who are unwell and it meets regulations. Toilets also meet regulations in terms of numbers but are of poor quality.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The parents' prospectus provides a satisfactory range of information about the school, but it needs revising because a few helpful sections are not comprehensive enough, such as procedures for complaints. The school has already started to update the content of the prospectus to make sure that it complies fully with the regulations. Reports to parents identify clearly pupils' recent effort and application. Likely subject grades are also provided. However, reports are not always clear about achievement made in specific areas and inspectors agree with the high proportion of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires and were not content with information on their child's progress.

Procedures for handling complaints

The procedures for handling complaints do not comply fully with the regulations and not all parents are comfortable or clear about how to proceed if they wish to complain. The aspects in need of revision are itemised in the next section of the report.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- give pupils experience in the technological and physical areas of learning (paragraph 1(2)(a)(ii)).
- ensure that information from assessment is utilised to plan teaching so that pupils can make progress (paragraph 1(3)(g)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- ensure that prior to confirmation of the appointment of all staff appropriate checks have been carried out to confirm their medical fitness (paragraph 4(c)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- ensure that a telephone number is provided during both term time and holidays where the proprietor can be contacted at all times (paragraph 6(2)(b))
- ensure that parents are aware they can request details of the complaints procedure adopted by the school, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of procedures for handling complaints (standard 7) and must:

- ensure the procedure allows for parents to attend the panel hearing and, if they wish, to be accompanied (paragraph 7(h))
- stipulate that the complainant, proprietors and headteacher, and where relevant the person complained about, should be given a copy of any findings and recommendations (paragraph 7(i))

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002 the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- Develop ways of recording pupils' progress over time and using assessment in a more systematic manner to raise achievement.
- Monitor and share good practice to improve teaching further and engage pupils more in their learning.

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- Investigate ways of giving pupils more responsibility, ensuring that they have a voice and engaging them in decision making, especially for the older pupils.
 - Improve the use of ICT by students both in lessons and in personal studies and investigate ways of accessing PE facilities.

School details

Name of school	Lammas School
DfES number	8916016
Unique reference number	122937
Type of school	All age day school
Status	Independent
Date school opened	1981
Age range of pupils	4-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 79 Girls: 78 Total: 157
Annual fees (day pupils)	Infants: £ 3750 Lower secondary: £ 4425 Primary: £ 3825 GCSE classes: £ 4650
Address of school	Lammas Road Sutton-in-Ashfield Nottinghamshire NG17 2AD
Telephone number	01623516879
Fax number	01623516879
Email address	information@lammas-school.co.uk
Headteacher	Mr C Peck
Proprietor	Mr D Coleshill
Reporting inspector	Marianick Ellender-Gelé HMI
Dates of inspection	11-12 June 2007