

# John Ferneley High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120264
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leicestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	302300
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ruth Westbrook

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>	Middle deemed secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–14
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	568
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Conroy Godber
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chris Robinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 June 2003
<b>School address</b>	Scalford Road Melton Mowbray LE13 1LH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01664 565901
<b>Fax number</b>	01664 480251

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<b>Age group</b>	11–14
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a middle school of average size, serving the town of Melton Mowbray and surrounding rural villages. The percentage of pupils receiving free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average and very small numbers are at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is in line with the average, and the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is above average. The school has been re-designated as an 11–18 school with effect from September 2009.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school. Standards have risen because good leadership and management have succeeded in improving the quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum since the time of the last inspection. Pupils' achievement is now good and pupils are reaching above average standards. In English, modern foreign languages and physical education (PE), pupils make outstanding progress. The headteacher and senior leaders have led this improvement by effectively sharing their vision and inspiring a commitment from staff and pupils. Central to this has been the sharing of the key values of trust and a belief that all members of the school community can make a contribution.

New staff appointments and an effective programme of training for existing staff have improved the quality of teaching and learning. This is now mostly good and some is outstanding. However, there is still some teaching which is only satisfactory. For example in science, where the exceptionally able pupils are not always challenged as well as they might be. Whilst marking and feedback to pupils is at least good in most subjects and excellent in English, there is some inconsistency. In some subjects, pupils do not always receive the feedback they need to make good progress.

The good curriculum provides a rich and well-balanced experience for pupils. The breadth and quality of enrichment and extra-curricular activities are outstanding, and a significant contributor to pupils' good personal development and well-being. Large numbers of pupils are inspired to volunteer their services and, as such, make an outstanding contribution to the community in a variety of ways. One example is the very effective contribution made to primary schools by the school's junior leaders in sports and languages.

Care, guidance and support are good. The assessment and tracking of pupils' progress have improved since the last inspection. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make outstanding progress because of the very effective additional support which they receive. As a result, they are included fully and are happy in school. Parents have a positive view of the school's work, as is shown in their response to the inspection's questionnaire. The great majority recognise the progress which their children are making within a caring environment and value the opportunities which exist. This was summed up by one parent as: 'my son is happy – his grades are excellent'.

The school's leaders and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This is reflected in the improvements which have been made and in the good quality of their planning for further development. This is supported by very effective management and financial systems. These factors and the maintenance of a positive ethos within the school community ensure that the capacity for improvement is good, and that the school provides good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that exceptionally able pupils are stretched in all subjects, particularly science and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Improve the overall quality of feedback to pupils about their learning and what they need to do to improve, by spreading the excellent practice in English to other subjects.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils achieve well. Pupils reach above average standards by the end of Year 9 from a broadly average starting point in Year 7. In English in 2006, pupils made outstanding progress and reached standards which were exceptional. Pupils reach well above average standards in modern foreign languages and PE, where a significant feature of lessons is the excellent response from pupils to the high expectations of the teaching. In other subjects, progress is good but exceptionally able pupils are not always challenged as well as they might be to reach the highest levels in some subjects.

There has been a remarkable rise in standards since the last inspection from above average to significantly above average. This is because the school's leadership has worked hard to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the school and to put in place a number of additional strategies to help pupils reach more challenging targets. As a result, pupils now make good rather than satisfactory progress.

All groups of pupils make at least good progress, but those with learning difficulties or disabilities make excellent progress. They are very well supported in class by teaching assistants, and teachers plan well for their individual needs. The small number of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English benefit from the additional support which they receive and make good progress as a result.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' good personal development and well-being are reflected in pupils' enthusiastic engagement with all that the school provides. Attendance at school has been good over a number of years and reflects pupils' interest in school life. The moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good, contributing to the harmonious relationships which exist between members of the school community. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils respond well to its promotion in humanities lessons, but they do not have so many opportunities to develop in this area in other aspects of school life. Pupils behave well both in lessons and around school, encouraged by the school's merit system. Recent initiatives to make the school a safer place have been embraced responsibly by pupils, and they have a greater confidence in the school's ability to resolve issues such as bullying. Pupils' commitment to adopting healthy lifestyles is good, reflected in their choices for physical activity and sport at lunchtimes and after school. Their contribution to the community is outstanding, through their full participation in a range of activities which give service to others or entertain. Drama groups visit infant pupils in local schools and also put on shows in a home for the elderly. They visit primary schools to assist with sport and modern languages. Pupils are well prepared for their future economic well-being by the development of effective personal qualities and the good progress they make in basic skills.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers' work is well planned. Lesson objectives are shared and pupils know what learning is expected of them. Teachers provide a variety of learning tasks

for pupils to undertake and offer help and support for pupils to succeed. In consequence, pupils work hard in most classes and make good progress. Teaching is particularly effective in English, PE and in modern foreign languages, where methods are exceptionally well matched to pupils' starting points for each lesson. Here, progress is very rapid and achievement is outstanding in these subjects. Whilst teaching in other areas of the school is generally good, there is some which is only satisfactory. Some teachers are less skilled in providing challenge for the full range of prior attainment and ability in each class. Here, planning does not take sufficient account of exceptionally able pupils who learn rapidly and who would rise to the challenge of more exacting work. Teachers mark work regularly. In some subjects, such as English, pupils are given excellent advice on how to improve their work. However, in science, marking does not provide such good, detailed guidance on standards reached nor advice on how to attain higher levels. Pupils' overall progress is assessed formally on two occasions each year. Underachievement is identified, and intervention with some pupils has contributed effectively to the improvements in standards.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a balanced curriculum that meets statutory requirements. Previous inspection reports identified weaknesses in provision for religious education, design and technology and ICT but these have been rectified and provision in these subjects is now satisfactory. The curriculum for humanities and the arts is rich, offering pupils many opportunities to be inspired by human creativity and cultural diversity. As a result, the school has improved opportunities for pupils to become aware of the spiritual dimension to their learning and to be able to reflect upon challenges to their own beliefs and actions. There is very good provision for PE and for modern foreign languages. The absence of national attainment testing in these subjects does not permit the school to record the high standards that some pupils reach following the curriculum that is provided.

The taught provision is considerably enhanced by the very extensive programme of extra-curricular activities that attracts many pupils to work together in the arts, on foreign visits, on sporting activities and other interests. School staff actively encourage all pupils to participate and make special arrangements to reduce barriers to inclusion. The numbers taking part are high.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The care, guidance and support of pupils are good and promote an environment where pupils feel safe and are able to seek help from adults should they need it. Healthy lifestyles have been encouraged by the school's successful pursuit of healthy school status. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are securely in place and risk assessment is undertaken meticulously.

The systems for setting challenging targets and tracking achievement work well, and are improving. Pupils most at risk of not succeeding are identified early and are given effective support in fulfilling their potential although, in a minority of subjects, the advice they receive is general rather than specific to that subject. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities receive outstanding support which enables them to take full advantage of the curriculum very successfully. Links with outside agencies are used to good effect to provide additional support and careers advice for pupils, and to promote industry days for Year 9 pupils. Good links with the upper school ensure smooth transition onto courses at the end of Year 9.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher sets clear direction to other staff. He is ably supported by the senior leadership team who have well-defined responsibilities. Together, they have ensured that staff and pupils feel part of the school's shared vision for all people to achieve their potential. The school has responded effectively to the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. From a situation that was then broadly satisfactory, provision and achievement are now good. The school has good procedures for evaluating its progress. It knows its strengths and weaknesses and has used this knowledge to improve where necessary. The school is well on the way to ensuring that the changeover to becoming an 11–18 school is smooth, and the school has worked effectively with partners on planning.

Middle leadership has improved since the previous inspection. The senior leaders have prioritised this with reasonable success and, overall, it is good. Well-targeted training has improved knowledge of data and middle leaders are held accountable for all aspects of work within their departments and they exercise good quality professional judgement. However, staff have varying levels of experience and some coordinators, who are new to their role, lack skills to support other members of the department to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Senior leaders have picked up on this and plans are in place to spread the good practice throughout the school.

Governance is good. Governors have overseen clear improvements in recent years in all aspects of the school's work. They know the school well and individual governors link closely with the work of departments. The school takes the views of parents and pupils into account when planning its work. Last year, for example, improvements were made to the school environment in response to issues raised by pupils about their safety in the regular pupil and parent survey.

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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>
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	1
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
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<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
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
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

13 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of John Ferneley High School, Melton Mowbray, LE13 1LH

I would like to thank you for the welcome you gave to me and my colleagues when we visited your school recently. Thank you for talking to us and giving us your views.

These are our main findings:

- John Ferneley High School is a good school
- you make good progress in your work and reach standards which are above average because of good teaching. In English, modern foreign languages and physical education, you make outstanding progress
- the curriculum is varied and the extra-curricular activities on offer are excellent and you enjoy participating in them very much
- your contribution to the community through your performances and work with young children in primary schools is outstanding
- the help that students with learning difficulties or disabilities receive is outstanding
- good relationships exist between members of the school. You enjoy coming to school and feel safe because staff care for you well
- the way you are prepared for future study and employment is good
- the school is improving because the headteacher, school leaders and governors run it well.

There are some things that the school needs to do to make your time there even better and you can help with these:

- provide some of you with harder challenges so that you can reach even higher standards
- provide you with clearer feedback when marking your work in all subjects so that you know what you have done well and what you need to do to improve.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Westbrook Lead Inspector