

Limehurst High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120243
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	302303
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2007
Reporting inspector	David Cox

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	371
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lisa Kilner
Headteacher	Steve Coneron
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2003
School address	Bridge Street Loughborough LE11 1NH
Telephone number	01509 263444
Fax number	01509 230755

Age group	11–14
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Limehurst High School is a smaller than average sized secondary school. The majority of students are from White British backgrounds although over one third of students are from minority ethnic groups, including students of Bangladeshi and Indian backgrounds. The proportion of students whose first language is not English is much higher than the national average. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is above the national average as is the proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding education. The school is more modest in its own evaluation. Without shouting from the rooftops about its many outstanding features, it quietly gets on providing students with the very best education. From a relatively low level on entry, students achieve exceedingly well and leave the school with broadly average standards. Students do so well because of the outstanding curriculum and the excellent teaching they receive. The school is very effective in identifying the needs and interests of the students and ensures they are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Students achieve very well in English and science. Achievement in mathematics is exceptional. This is because of outstanding and innovative teaching. Outstanding care, support and guidance promote students' exceptional personal development and well-being. Extensive support for vulnerable students and students facing challenging circumstances enables them to make the same progress as other students. Students are safe, healthy and very well cared for so that they develop confidence and a pride in their school. Students happily take responsibility, having participated directly in the appointment process of the headteacher. They behave impeccably and are enthusiastic learners. Their concern for others is demonstrated by the many fund raising events they organise. Most students know how well they are doing and how to improve their work. However, in some subjects, there are occasions when students are not sure of the level at which they are working and struggle to know what to do next. This slows their progress. Teaching and learning are outstanding. The strong emphasis on high quality teaching and learning ensures students are stimulated and challenged to aim high. Teachers encourage students to make contributions to lessons and this helps to improve students' listening and speaking skills. Teachers have excellent relationships with the students and this helps to make learning enjoyable. Teachers are enthusiastic and well organised. Occasionally, opportunities are missed for students to use information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance their learning. The school offers students an outstanding curriculum. There are many exciting activities for students and the school is justly proud of its numerous awards. Outstanding leadership and management at all levels ensure students continue to achieve exceedingly well. The headteacher's leadership is outstanding and he is very well supported by other senior leaders. The school has a long history of students' successful achievement in all areas of their education. This is indicative of an outstanding capacity to improve. The school review process is clear, robust, comprehensive and effective. Governors play a strong part in the life of the school and planning for its future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure ICT is used more consistently to enhance students' learning.
- Ensure all students are aware of their current level of performance and how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Students' achievement is outstanding. When they start at the school students have levels of skills and abilities that are well below those expected nationally. The school gives a high priority to the development of literacy and numeracy skills. This serves the students very well and enables them to make outstanding progress. Students reach standards broadly in line with national averages in tests in Year 9 and this is confirmed by work seen during the inspection. Challenging targets for improvement are set each year and these are normally exceeded. There

is exceptional achievement in mathematics because of excellent teaching. In the 2006 tests, in science, a small minority of more able students did not achieve as well as other students. A detailed analysis by the science department and successful actions are ensuring more able students now achieve as well as other students. Those students with English as an additional language also make outstanding progress as a result of extremely effective support. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities make outstanding progress because of the high quality care and support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of the students are outstanding. Students say they value the opportunities to work with people with different opinions and from different backgrounds. They are proud of their school and are excited by the wide range of opportunities to develop personal skills. Through the school council they feel empowered to influence school policy including being involved with the architects in redesigning the new reception area. They say the school listens to their opinions and responds quickly to requests such as for the provision of drinking fountains. Students are aware of how to keep healthy and large numbers take up the wide variety of sporting activities offered, many delivered by professional sportsmen and sportswomen providing inspirational role models. Students feel safe and well supported. Incidents of bullying are minimal and are swiftly dealt with. Older students take an active role in supporting the younger ones and they enjoy working together. Teachers and senior staff know their students well and there is a strong ethos of mutual respect and care. Students' attitudes to learning and behaviour in lessons and around the school are excellent. As a result of students' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development there is a strong community and team spirit. Students are involved in raising funds for charity, working with local schools and the wider community and take their responsibilities for protecting the environment seriously. Cultural diversity is celebrated and valued. Students display a maturity and confidence in their relationships with adults. They are encouraged to take responsibility and to show initiative. These personal skills enable them to develop as rounded individuals able to contribute effectively to the community and eventually transfer to working roles. Students enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in the above average attendance rates of most students. A very small group of students are absent for long periods due to visiting families abroad. As a result the overall attendance rate falls to broadly average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teaching is characterised by thorough planning. Work is very well matched to the needs of all students and this enables them to make rapid progress. Teachers have high expectations and provide interesting topics that capture the imagination of students such as getting students to produce high quality graphical time lines about what has happened in their own lifetime. The pace of lessons is brisk and there is always positive encouragement. This helps students to develop high self-esteem and the confidence to try to do their best. Behaviour management is excellent. Teaching in mathematics is outstanding because of thorough planning and results in work that is very well matched to the needs of all students. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to supporting all groups of students. Innovative use of ICT in some lessons, for example, getting the pupils to

control the temperature of a model greenhouse via a computer, motivates students and many are able to work on their own. However, across the school there is not a consistent approach to using ICT to enhance students' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and is very effective in meeting the range and interests of the students. Links with primary schools are effective and Limehurst's teachers support primary schools with modern languages and other subjects. This is a key way of promoting continuity of learning. Coherent links with local secondary schools ensure students have 'taster' experience of vocational work and prepare students well for subjects not available at Limehurst. Links between different subjects are well established enabling students to transfer knowledge and skills. This is particularly evident in the well crafted humanities programme and the exceptional number of curriculum linked external visits. Of particular note is the recent visit to Strasbourg. An outstanding personal, health and social education programme provides opportunities for students to participate actively in learning about more abstract ideas. Extensive, well supported enrichment opportunities including activities such as Latin American dance, contribute significantly to students' enjoyment of school life.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support of students are outstanding. Parents hold the school in very high regard and feel fully involved in the school as a result of a variety of initiatives co-ordinated by the Home School Development officer. One parent typically commented, 'The school provides a caring, nurturing and multicultural environment.' Students feel very well cared for and because relationships are so good, they know they can seek help and support whenever they need it. This support begins before they join the school and continues throughout to transition at the end of Year 9. Students know how to keep healthy because of the excellent support provided by the school nurse. Students for whom English is an additional language are extremely well supported and mentors from the local community also help these students. Student progress is generally tracked carefully with individual targets set. However, there is some inconsistency in approach across the curriculum, resulting in small numbers of students being unclear about their targets and levels. There are robust systems in place to identify underachievement, which is acted upon swiftly and effectively. Teachers work with great empathy to support the students with learning difficulties and disabilities. The co-ordinated approach to working with outside agencies ensures that vulnerable students are very well supported and cared for. Procedures for safeguarding children are robust.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management, including governance, are outstanding. The headteacher, along with other leaders, has a strong sense of pride in the school and is determined to provide students with the very best education. To this end he has been very successful as shown by students' outstanding achievement and personal development. He has high ambitions for the school's future. Leaders are continuously reviewing and evaluating the work of the school. This rigorous approach enables resources to be directed to areas of most need, for example, additional

mentors and support assistants have been employed to help those students with specific language difficulties. Resources are effectively deployed and the school provides outstanding value for money. Governors have a clear view of how well the school is doing. They offer excellent support and challenge to the school.

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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>	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	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
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
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
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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
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

18 June 2007 Dear Students Inspection of Limehurst High School, Loughborough LE11 1NH
Thank you all very much for making us feel so welcome in your school when we visited recently. We were really impressed with you all and the way you were very happy to tell us about your school. You and your parents are rightly proud of Limehurst. Like you, we think your school is outstanding. There are so many good things to report about your school. It is very clear that you go to an extremely caring school. The school helps you to gain confidence in yourselves and you all have excellent attitudes to learning. We know this, because we saw you all working hard in school and your behaviour was excellent. You show a very good understanding of the importance of eating the right food and exercising regularly. You show consideration for others and are friendly and helpful to each other. We were impressed by how older pupils take responsibility for helping others within the school. You all make excellent progress with your work. Those of you who need extra help make the same excellent progress because the school gives lots of attention to helping you learn. Teachers are really excellent and make lessons fun. You have lovely relationships with all the staff. Teachers make a real effort to find interesting ways of helping you to learn. Many of you talked to us about all the clubs that are on offer and we were very impressed at some of the things that you achieve in these activities. As a result of your headteacher and other staff doing a wonderful job, your school has continued to improve since it was last inspected. We are sure that it will improve even further. Even the best schools can get better and your school tries to do just that. We have asked the school to do two things. The first is to ensure that your teachers make greater use of ICT to help you learn. The second is to make sure you know how well you are doing in all subjects so that you can improve your work even further. David Cox Lead inspector