

Canon Lee School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121662
Local Authority	York
Inspection number	327544
Inspection dates	5–6 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Ian Richardson HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	841
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Fowler
Headteacher	Mr K Deadman
Date of previous school inspection	14 September 2005
School address	Rawcliffe Drive Clifton Without York North Yorkshire YO30 6ZS
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The school is situated in an area of York that, overall, is close to the average for socio-economic factors and the proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is also around the average. However, the range of contexts is broad with 30% of students coming from homes in the 20% most disadvantaged circumstances and 5% from the least disadvantaged 20%. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around the national average, but the proportion that have a statement of special educational needs is less than half the national average. The school was awarded Specialist Arts College status in September 2005 and had previously received a School Achievement Award in 2003 in recognition of the significant improvement over the previous three years. The school has also been awarded Artsmark Gold, Sportsmark and Healthy Schools status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Since the last inspection the school has made improvements on the issues identified. It has improved the way that assessment data are analysed and used to promote higher achievement. Standards are above average and achievement is good, which were judged satisfactory at the last inspection, are now good. The school now has higher expectations of its students and this is seen in the challenging targets it has set. As a consequence of good leadership and management and overall good teaching, students have responded with improved attendance and higher achievement. However, there is a small proportion of students who are persistent non-attenders and they are limiting the school raising attendance levels further.

The school is effective in making good provision for the education and personal development of students. Child protection measures and safeguarding procedures are fully in place as are risk assessments. The school has made significant progress in promoting community cohesion and has contributed to this endeavour in a wide range of ways. The school has an arts community programme that extends the school's provision to those living in this part of York. A range of appropriate policies contribute to the way the community works, for example policies on anti-bullying, equal opportunities and disability discrimination. Projects with the police, youth service, school health counselling service and face-to-face mediation have all built a sense of community and alerted students to how they can contribute. Students describe their enjoyment of charity work, music concerts, drama presented for those outside the school and helping in events for senior citizens. Students talked to inspectors of their enjoyment of school and their feeling safe. While they described some poor behaviour of individuals, 'usually the same few', they say that bullying does not often happen and is usually quickly settled by staff.

Since the school was designated as a specialist arts school in 2005, targets have always been met in all of the specialist subjects of art, music and drama. In 2008 results in all three subjects were above the corresponding national average in each subject. The school has used teaching methodologies from across these subjects to develop a more creative style of teaching across the whole curriculum. This has been particularly successful regarding improving science results and promoting an improved quality of teaching that many students say they enjoy. The school impressively tracks not only the progress of its students but also the effectiveness of the community dimension of its specialist schools programme. Particular success stories have been the support given to all partnership primary schools so that all Year 5 pupils receive instrumental tuition. Collaboration with another secondary school has led to the setting up of a music technology course and has promoted adults in the wider community learning to use digital photography.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve punctuality and attendance further, particularly for those who are persistent non-attenders.
- Improve behaviour such that all students demonstrate good behaviour and self-control as the majority do now.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The achievement of students is good and standards have continued to rise following a dip in 2006. Students enter the school with attainment levels that are typically below the national

average. The most recent public examination results show significant improvements have been made. In 2008 the proportion of students leaving school at the end of Year 11 with five or more A* to C grades was in line with the national average. This represented a significant improvement on the results in 2006. In addition, the proportion of students leaving school with five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics has now improved to be on a par with the national figure. The attainment in specialist arts subjects of music, drama and art were above the corresponding national average in each subject in 2008. The percentage of students achieving at least two A* to C at GCSE in science was significantly above the national average from being well below in 2006. The overall picture of performance is that of an improving school.

Particularly challenging targets in the specialist subject areas have been met or exceeded every year since the school's designation as a specialist arts college in 2005. Scrutiny of students' work, records of assessment and observation of lessons show that students in the current Year 11 are making good progress. The school's robust tracking data provides compelling evidence for students' attainment to be higher this year than in 2008. Intervention strategies are enabling students from the full range of abilities, who may be at risk of underachieving, to benefit from mentoring by form tutors and from coaching by subject specialists. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as other students because of the good quality support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Overall, the personal development and well-being of students are good. Students show a good understanding of the need for healthy lifestyles and this is evidenced by the many students participating in regular physical sporting activities. An increasing number of students cycle to school. The school has been awarded the Healthy Schools standard. Students feel safe in school and demonstrate a good awareness of appropriate safety measures. They carry out procedures and use equipment carefully in practical subjects such as physical education and science. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with clear learning opportunities and time for reflection in lessons. Parents are kept well informed on matters relating to students' behaviour and their progress.

When lessons are challenging and students participate actively, they clearly enjoy their education, but in some lessons they show less enthusiasm for learning and some can show poor behaviour. Many students say that their enjoyment of school is enhanced by the range of activities available through the school's arts status. Significant numbers of students take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as the school band and the school choir. Students also take part in wider community projects including charity fundraising and supporting elderly residents in a local old people's centre.

A well-planned work experience programme and a good range of vocational courses and work-related learning initiatives help students develop the skills and qualities required for adult working life. Enterprise education is built into the personal and social curriculum in Key Stage 3 and there are good links with other outside agencies to develop enterprise education. The school has recognised the need to promote good self-management of students and has worked, for example, on improving students' punctuality and attendance. Attendance overall has improved and is now broadly satisfactory when compared with national figures, but there are a number of persistent absentees who adversely affect attendance figures.

Students generally collaborate well with each other in lessons and show respect for peers and adults. Inappropriate behaviour by a minority of students is generally well dealt with by staff. In and around the school, however, some students are rather boisterous and show a lack of self-discipline. A significant number of those parents completing questionnaires expressed a concern about poor behaviour disrupting learning but inspection showed this was only in a minority of classes. Bullying is minimal in school according to students. They are clear about the procedures that exist to deal with any instances of bullying and have confidence in staff to resolve their problems.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. The inspection team's judgements on teaching and learning are close to those arrived at by the school's management as part of the school's own effective monitoring and evaluation. The senior and middle leadership teams have implemented more rigorous monitoring recently and have increased opportunities to share best practice. These developments underpin the progress being made in strengthening the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, teachers are confident and reflective. Overall, they use assessment information effectively in order to set targets and track students' progress. The impact can be seen in the good achievement of students.

Teachers plan a variety of appropriate activities that are well matched to students' needs. Consequently, in the most effective lessons, students are enthusiastic and enjoy their work because they are actively involved. Most teachers use questioning techniques skilfully to check on learning and challenge individual students at an appropriate level. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) well to stimulate and motivate students where possible, but the use of interactive technology to raise engagement in lessons is inconsistent across the school. Lesson objectives are routinely shared with students, who respond well to knowing what it is they are learning and why.

When given the opportunity, students enjoy working collaboratively and readily take responsibility for their learning. Usually behaviour is managed skilfully so that lessons progress smoothly. Occasionally, however, inconsistencies in teachers' management of behaviour mean that some students become inattentive and their progress is hindered. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are taught well. They make good progress because their learning and behavioural needs are skilfully supported, often by able, well-deployed teaching assistants.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that serves the needs of students throughout the school well. It is well designed to be inclusive and makes it possible for all students to make good progress and develop well. There are good, varied opportunities for enrichment, including a wide range of after-school activities, especially in sport, music and drama, which extend students' experiences and contribute valuably to their personal development. These opportunities are very popular with students. There is good provision of enterprise opportunities to develop students' future economic well-being.

A number of developments at Key Stage 3 are helping to ensure that the curriculum matches students' needs more closely. These include the introduction of the transition unit for a small number of students. This unit is designed to ease their move into secondary school by improving their learning skills in the areas of numeracy, literacy, working with others and self-management.

The curriculum in Key Stage 4 is well developed and has been broadened to include a good variety of pathways that include vocational elements in order to meet the needs and interests of students. The school works very effectively with partners to provide worthwhile opportunities for students to study off site in college and work placements. These courses are contributing to improved employment opportunities for students on leaving school. Steps have been taken this year to introduce a new diploma course in society, health and development for a group of girls in Year 10. They have responded positively to the opportunity and are making good progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support that students receive are good. The school works hard to support all students to ensure that they develop well. The school has been active in encouraging students to be healthy by, for example, introducing healthy meals. Such developments are done with the cooperation of parents and a high priority is given to seeking their views.

A well-structured guidance programme ensures that students receive thorough support and information when deciding on their curricular choices and subsequent education, training and employment. Careers advice is of good quality thanks in part to the work of the Connexions service. The significant uptake of vocational courses by students, made possible by the variety of educational pathways, has contributed well to their preparation for life beyond school. Good use is made of data from assessments to track students' academic progress, determine which students need extra support and set challenging targets for improvement. However, this information is not consistently used in all teaching to ensure that students are given appropriate guidance and challenged to do their best. Nevertheless, overall, students reach satisfactory standards.

The school has made progress in bringing attendance of students to the national average but some students, particularly in Key Stage 4, have a history of persistent absence. The school has identified this and is putting into place strategies to address the issue. Fixed-term exclusions rose last academic year but the school now has more robust procedures to deal with behavioural problems which are having a positive impact. In collaboration with the local authority the school has created 'The Hub' – a facility designed to deal proactively with students in danger of permanent exclusion. This is already proving to be effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good. The vision that senior leaders have for priorities to develop the school are shared with and understood by curriculum leaders and other staff. Overall, staff feel well supported in their work both by subject leaders and senior leaders. There is an open culture in the management of the school which causes staff to express the view that they can 'have their say' at subject level and that senior leaders listen to their views. There is a clear framework of meetings that connect staff effectively with a range of

responsibilities to key considerations in the school. The paperless emailing system introduced two years ago keeps staff well informed and is appreciated by them.

Staff understand themselves to be accountable and faculty leaders are required to give an account of their curriculum area to the governing body. A member of the senior leadership team becomes involved with each faculty and provides a secure link between the leadership team and teachers. There are clear systems for the evaluation of effectiveness. Performance data is gathered and organised in such a way as to identify areas of success and issues that need attention.

The school's leaders are effective at monitoring progress and standards in the school. They analyse a range of relevant data thoroughly. Tracking systems are in place to inform teachers' planning and to target intervention for individual students. The school's self-evaluation is thorough and accurate. Performance data are used well to set challenging targets and the school has set higher targets than those suggested by the system they have adopted. The governing body is involved in monitoring standards and is effective both at providing support for and challenge to the leadership of the school.

Planning is rational and the strategies put into place are well matched to the developmental needs of the school. The record of improvement since the last inspection evidences the effectiveness of planning and the responsiveness of school's leadership and management to issues they identify. Many of the strategies implemented have built into them the ways that their impact may be evaluated.

Overall, the school is well equipped for the education of students. There are areas for improvement that have been clearly identified and there is a programme for improvement in response. Resources are efficiently deployed and are effective at providing well for students. The financial management of the school has been successful in returning the school to a positive financial position. Financial and auditing processes are secure and externally validated. The school is providing good value for money.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I would like to thank you for the way you helped the inspection team with their work in your school. During the two days we met many students who were pleasant and polite. We enjoyed talking with those we interviewed and also noted that you enjoy much of what happens in your school, both in lessons and in the many other activities that are offered. You should make the most of all the opportunities you are offered.

You told us that, on the whole, you feel safe and enjoy school. You did say that some lessons could be disrupted by the poor behaviour of a few pupils, but this was often well managed by teachers. You think the teaching at Canon Lee is good and we agree with you overall. You receive good support, care and guidance from teachers and you tell us that teachers are willing to help you with any issues you have. There are a good range of courses at GCSE and the leadership and management of the school is effective at making sure that the courses and teaching are meeting your educational needs. We noticed that some of you are not getting to lessons on time. If you are one of the students who turn up late you need to act responsibly and make sure you are on time from now on.

While there were no major aspects of your school found to be less than good, we believe with your headteacher that even the good can be better. We have asked your school to do the following things.

- Improve punctuality and attendance further, particularly for those who are persistent non-attenders.
- Improve behaviour such that all students demonstrate good behaviour and self-control as the majority do now.