

Lordswood Boys' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103484
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	336090
Inspection dates	4–5 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Davinder Dosanjh HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	705
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	85
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Brownsword
Headteacher	D Hadley-Pryce
Date of previous school inspection	5 April 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 25 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents, including whole-school policies, improvement plans, data on current pupil performance and the 27 questionnaires completed by the parents. They also considered the results of questionnaires completed by the staff and by a sample of students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- achievement in mathematics and English
- how well teaching challenges students and accelerates their progress
- the impact of the school's specialist sports status on whole school improvement
- the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation undertaken by leaders and managers at all levels in order to promote improvement
- the impact of new structures and initiatives on the quality of educational provision and outcomes for students.

Information about the school

Lordswood Boys' School is smaller than most secondary schools. It offers sixth form provision in partnership with four other local schools. The great majority of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, with Pakistani, Indian, Caribbean and White British students forming the largest groups, and many other groups represented. For many students English is an additional language but few are at an early stage in learning English. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average as is the number of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Lordswood Boys' became a specialist school for sports in September 2004 and has been awarded Sportsmark, Silver Artsmark and the International Schools award. The school was runner-up in the Innovation Award at the School Sports Partnership Conference in 2008.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school has experienced some significant staff changes within the last eighteen months with four senior leaders leaving the school. Nevertheless, it has continued to provide a satisfactory quality of education and maintained a focus on improving achievement. A fundamental restructuring of the school has been undertaken and successfully achieved. The newly formed senior leadership team is growing in confidence with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The headteacher has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is driving through improvements in many areas of the school but these are not yet embedded and making sufficient impact in all areas of the school's performance. The school improvement plan has appropriate priorities for development but in some areas these are not specific or linked explicitly enough to measurable benefits for students. The newly appointed faculty heads display some highly effective practice but, along with the senior leaders, not all are sufficiently evaluating the work of their teams and some improvements are not happening fast enough. Capacity to improve is therefore satisfactory; essential systems are in place to take the school forward. Students' performance across GCSE subjects is uneven but achievement in vocational subjects is good. Overall, students make satisfactory progress. However, the proportion of students who achieve GCSE grade C or above in both English and mathematics is low. The school sets itself challenging targets but these often lack clarity and are not well understood by staff. The school cares for and supports students well, and most feel safe. While behaviour is satisfactory, a minority of students express concerns about feeling safe and behaviour. Cultural development and the use of international links are a strength of the school. Pastoral care for vulnerable students is good and includes effective support from relevant outside agencies.

The school's good curriculum is broad and well matched to the needs of its students. Specialist sports status makes an important contribution in enhancing the curriculum. It extends students' enjoyment and personal development, particularly in developing leadership skills. The specialism permeates many aspects of school life. There is a very high rate of participation in inter-school and inter-house sports. The opportunities for after-school and residential activities are particularly wide-ranging for the large number of students who are members of the combined cadet force. There are good links with schools in South Africa and Pakistan, alongside a number of high profile projects with national governing bodies of sport, such as a thriving judo club.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory but vary in their impact on learning. In the good lessons, teachers use assessment data effectively to plan what they are going to do and learning activities that are well matched to students' abilities so the least able

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are supported and most able challenged. They deliver lessons at a lively pace with a range of stimulating activities and very effective plenary sessions at the end where learning is evaluated. These skills are not displayed by all teachers and marking is not consistently helpful to students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement in mathematics and English by:
 - identifying and providing additional support for underachieving students
 - ensuring tracking and monitoring of student progress are frequent and robust
 - providing opportunities for students to review learning in lessons and set realistic targets for improvement.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning so more is good or better by ensuring that:
 - assessment information is used to plan lessons and learning activities are well matched to students' abilities, so the least able are sufficiently supported and the most able are sufficiently challenged
 - marking is constructive, of high quality and gives clear feedback on how to improve
 - plenary sessions are planned so that learning can be evaluated at the end of the lesson
 - lessons provide more time for active learning.
- Develop the skills of new leaders and managers to ensure monitoring and evaluation are rigorous by:
 - fully completing the school improvement plan with measurable outcomes by the end of November 2009
 - using reliable and robust target setting which all staff understand
 - developing a collective vision for driving forward improvements.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Students' attainment on entry to the school is below average and by the time they leave the school in Year 11 they make satisfactory progress. However, the progress made in vocational subjects is good. Whereas most groups show similar rates of progress overall, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, students taking up free schools meals and Caribbean boys do particularly well, while Pakistani boys do less well in English and mathematics. The school's systems for tracking students' progress are developing.

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There are good opportunities for students to acquire workplace skills through the broad range of vocational courses but their preparation for economic well-being is hampered by weak literacy and numeracy and skills. In addition, GSCE results in English and mathematics fluctuate and are low. Attendance is satisfactory with increasingly effective systems in place to monitor it. In the majority of lessons observed, students were making satisfactory progress. Students' behaviour in lessons was usually linked to the effectiveness of teaching, which is also corroborated by the students' comments in the questionnaire. In the best lessons, behaviour was good, and in lessons where teaching was not sufficiently challenging and teachers were not skilful in implementing behaviour management strategies, learning was disrupted and students' progress slowed down. Very high participation rates in sports contribute well to the adoption of healthy lifestyles but other aspects of personal, social and health education are satisfactory. Discussions with students indicate their contribution to the school and wider community is satisfactory, and an improving feature. The influence of the school council is limited because it does not meet often enough. Students' spiritual, moral, social and development is satisfactory but cultural development is good and supported well by enrichment activities through the specialism.

Along with staff, students have experienced a number of changes in recent months. In the student questionnaire, a minority raised concerns about disruptive behaviour, feeling safe and enjoyment. The different groups of students interviewed by inspectors agreed they felt safe, were well cared for and enjoyed school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Relationships between staff and students are good and based on mutual respect. In most lessons seen, students were keen to learn and attitudes were positive. Students enjoy opportunities for active tasks and relish discussion opportunities, but say that these are only provided in some lessons. In the best lessons, effective questioning challenges students' thinking and stimulates debate. In these lessons, teacher and students have high expectations of what can be achieved, and there is a sense of teamwork as students and teachers work together towards a common goal. Students are able to reinforce and build on their prior learning because of well-planned tasks. In less effective lessons, teachers fail to use assessment data effectively to plan to meet the needs of individuals and groups of students. Although students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are gifted and talented are frequently identified in lesson plans, and different learning outcomes are stated, these are not shared with students and there is no planning to show how these outcomes will be achieved for different groups. Too often, all students are set the same work regardless of their needs, resulting in the least able not completing a task and the most able being insufficiently challenged. Marking is often brief and lacks sufficient detail to enable students to understand what they need to do to improve. Although some work is graded or has levels, there is little indication to students of what they have done well and what they need to do to reach the next stage. Insufficient opportunities are provided for students to respond to comments by correcting or re-drafting their work. Consequently, many instances were seen where the same comment was made week after week.

The curriculum is well thought out and a major strength is the school's sports specialism. It provides extensive opportunities which students would otherwise not have access to, in particular through the combined cadet force. A broad range of vocational courses meet the needs and interests of most students at Key Stage 4. All students have the opportunity to study German in Years 10 and 11. Regular theme days, which cover such topics as cultural diversity and healthy lifestyles, enhance students' experience and personal development. There is an exceptional choice of lunchtime and after-school activities. The curriculum is constantly under review.

The school works well with external agencies to support students who need extra help. Transition arrangements from primary to secondary education ensure that students settle quickly as they reach each stage of their education. As a result of behaviour management strategies, behaviour has improved so that fewer lessons are disrupted and students say that they are treated fairly and more consistently. Students whose

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behaviour is consistently poor are well supported and the school works hard to ensure that an appropriate curriculum meets their needs so that they are better engaged. Extended support, such as in anger management, enables these students to cope better with life in school. Students with English as an additional language are well supported through the language and learning centre enabling them to be quickly integrated into classes. Support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities has been weak. This has been recognised by the school and staff are now taking appropriate action to deal with these issues.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers communicate ambition and drive improvement satisfactorily. The school meets safeguarding regulations and staff training is suitable. Risks and dangers are identified adequately. The school recognises the needs of vulnerable students and gives priority to their welfare. Systems are in place to ensure parents and carers are informed of progress. They are generally supportive of the school. The school serves a very diverse and fragmented community. Therefore, work is being undertaken with hard-to-reach parents and carers and parent support assistants are in place but the impact of this work is not yet fully evident.

The school satisfactorily promotes equality of opportunity for all students. Effective action has been taken to improve the provision for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Inconsistencies remain in the quality for teaching and how the needs of individual students are addressed in lessons. The school is actively promoting community cohesion both within the school and beyond. The school's monitoring of the impact of what it does lacks rigour. Sport plays a key role in developing active partnerships with local schools, the Oaks Collegiate, and through the combined cadet force. Therefore, it provides many opportunities for students to mix with young people from diverse backgrounds and areas in the United Kingdom and take on sports leadership coaching in local and overseas partner schools.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3

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The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Over the last three years, examination results show that attainment and progress are satisfactory overall, despite a dip in academic performance in 2009. The provision is steadily altering to provide fewer, relatively successful A levels, while the vocational provision is expanding to reflect demand from students and the successes in Key Stage 4. The sixth form provides a limited but growing set of opportunities for students to exercise responsibilities such as sports leadership and mentoring in the lower school.

There is effective and frequent monitoring of effort and academic progress through the tutor system. Most students go on to complete their chosen qualifications. Progression levels into higher education are high. Students are positive about the support and guidance provided on future choices. The head of sixth form has a clear strategic overview of his role and the direction of travel for the sixth form.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

The rate of response to the inspection questionnaire was very low. A very large majority of parents and carers who responded agree that the school keeps their children safe and informs them about their children's progress at school. A minority question whether the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns and helps them to support their

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children's learning. These are areas the school is working to improve. A number of negative comments centre around parents' and carers' perceptions of students' behaviour and support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Inspectors found that the school has made improvements in both areas but actions are not yet fully embedded. Parents and carers were positive about the specialist sports status and its inclusive nature.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lordswood Boys' School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 27 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 705 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	4	15	18	67	3	11	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	5	19	19	70	2	7	1	4
The school informs me about my child's progress	3	11	19	70	3	11	2	7
My child is making enough progress at this school	3	12	15	58	5	19	2	8
The teaching is good at this school	2	7	18	67	6	22	1	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	3	11	13	48	8	30	2	7
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	4	15	14	52	6	22	2	7
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	3	11	14	52	4	15	4	15
The school meets my child's particular needs	2	7	16	59	4	15	4	15
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	4	15	14	52	4	15	4	15
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	15	11	41	9	33	2	7
The school is led and managed effectively	3	11	14	52	6	27	2	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	4	15	13	50	5	19	3	12

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



6 November 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Lordswood Boys' School, Birmingham, B17 8BJ

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome at your school. We all enjoyed talking with you and you helped us to find out about the school. These are our findings about your school.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education.

Specialist sports status has brought you many benefits and is a very strong feature of the school.

The combined cadet force provides a wealth of opportunities to develop your confidence, leadership skills and self-discipline.

The curriculum is broad and enables you to do well on vocational courses.

Your cultural development is good and supported well by links with schools in South Africa and Pakistan.

The majority of you tell us you feel safe and behaviour is satisfactory but a minority of you express some concerns.

Some of the teaching you experience is good; however, in other lessons you are not always challenged to reach your full potential.

The school cares for and supports you well.

The headteacher and senior leaders know what needs to be done to improve the school and have already started to do this.

We have asked senior leaders to prioritise the following developments:

- improve how well you do in mathematics and English
- raise the quality of teaching and learning so more is good or better
- develop the skills of new leaders and managers to ensure they carefully monitor and evaluate what goes on in the school.

You can help them by continuing to work hard in all your lessons and making sure your behaviour enables you and other pupils to learn. We would like to wish you all the very best in your studies and every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Davinder Dosanjh

Her Majesty's Inspector

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