

Lawnswood School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108055
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	337017
Inspection dates	21–22 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Julie Price Grimshaw

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1520
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Amamda Jahdi
Headteacher	Mr Milan Davidovic
Date of previous school inspection	7 January 2007
School address	Ring Road West Park Leeds LS16 5AG
Telephone number	0113 2844020
Fax number	0113 2844021
Email address	davidovic.mil@elawnswood.co.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by six additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 36 lessons, and held meetings with staff, governors and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at: school improvement plans; national published data and the school's own data; students' work and a wide range of other documentation, including that related to the safeguarding of students. A total of 140 questionnaires were received from parents and these were scrutinised along with questionnaires completed by students and staff.

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

- the progress currently being made by students, in particular those groups targeted by the school as needing additional support
- the attendance of students and steps taken by the school to address students' absence
- the extent of the school's improvement since the last inspection, and the impact of this on outcomes for students
- the effectiveness of the school's procedures in helping students to keep themselves safe.

Information about the school

Lawnswood is a much larger than average school situated three miles from Leeds city centre. It serves a wide catchment area which is mixed in socio-economic terms. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is above the national average, although few of these students are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is just below the national average. The school was awarded mathematics and computing college status in 2004. It also holds a number of awards, including Healthy Schools status and the Inclusion Charter Mark.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Lawnswood has successfully developed some aspects of its work since the last inspection. For example, the addition of new courses and routes into post-16 education or training is helping to meet more students' needs. The introduction of a system to track students' progress has contributed to the improved achievement of targeted groups, such as African/Caribbean girls and Kashmiri Pakistani boys. Following a dip in standards in 2007, attainment improved in 2008 and the most recent examination results at Key Stage 4, although slightly lower, show that attainment remains broadly in line with average.

Nevertheless, the rate of students' progress is uneven, with progress at Key Stage 3 being slower than that at Key Stage 4. The quality of learning is often severely affected by students' poor behaviour. Staff do not always manage behaviour well in lessons, and this, when combined with weak planning and generally low expectations, leads to too many lessons being inadequate. A significant proportion of students have poor attitudes to learning and are disrespectful to adults and to their peers, both in and out of lessons. Students do not always have an accurate perception of their own safety and occasionally behave in such a way as to put each other at risk of injury. The school's systems for ensuring that students remain safe are not always effective.

The school makes adequate, and sometimes good, provision for its most vulnerable students. However, too many of the students identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities are not consistently provided with suitable work and support, and therefore do not always make the progress of which they are capable. Attendance rates, although improved since the last inspection, remain below average and this has a significant impact on outcomes for students. The school has implemented a number of strategies to improve attendance, but these have not been fully effective and too many students fail to attend regularly.

The school's specialist status has had a positive impact in some respects; for example, the school has met its Key Stage 4 targets for information and communication technology (ICT) for the last two years, and although attainment in mathematics declined significantly in 2009, increased numbers of students in the sixth form have chosen to study mathematics.

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The sixth form is a strength of the school. It provides good-quality education for students. The effective leadership and management of the sixth form helps to ensure that students are supported well, both academically and personally, and outcomes for students are consistently good.

Leaders and managers have been too generous in evaluating many aspects of the school's work. The monitoring of teaching and learning, including the management of students' behaviour, has not been effective enough, and so the school's policies and procedures are not consistently applied by all staff. Behaviour and attendance were highlighted as areas for improvement at the time of the last inspection and too little progress has been made in addressing these weaknesses. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is inadequate: this, combined with the school's inaccurate view of its effectiveness, means that there is insufficient capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that systems and procedures for the safeguarding of students are fully effective.
- Improve students' behaviour by ensuring consistent implementation of strategies for behaviour management across the school.
- Raise the quality of teaching by making sure that all staff have sufficiently high expectations of students and plan learning effectively.
- Improve attendance so it is at least in line with the national average.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Students' attainment on entry to Year 7 varies considerably, with the full ability range being represented within each year group. Overall, students reach broadly average standards by the end of Key Stage 4. The school's tracking system highlights any significant underachievement by particular groups of students, for example, according to ethnicity. This has enabled staff to provide targeted support for these groups, the achievement of some having subsequently improved over recent years. However, many students do not make the progress of which they are capable. Their learning is often disrupted by poor behaviour during lessons. Expectations of students in lessons, particularly in Years 7 to 9, are sometimes too low, and this slows progress. Although for many learning gains pace during Years 10 and 11, this uneven pattern of progress means that achievement overall is inadequate. A small minority of students, identified as the most vulnerable, are well supported and this enables them to make satisfactory progress. Nevertheless, a significant proportion of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities underachieve. A relatively large proportion of students do not attend school regularly enough, and this has a detrimental effect on their achievement.

The majority of students say that they feel safe around the school, but a significant minority are worried that bullying is an issue, and this is echoed in the concerns of some parents. Students do not always show a good understanding of safe practices, for instance when moving around the school, and a few seem unaware that their overly

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boisterous behaviour can result in injury or distress.

Students have an adequate understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, and many benefit considerably from the good opportunities for sporting activities and exercise. They make a satisfactory contribution to the school community, although many feel that they are not given enough opportunities to participate in making decisions about their school. There is evidence of some commendable work within the local community, for example through students' visits to local primary schools. Their skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT help them to be adequately prepared for further study and the world of work. The promotion of spiritual development, for example through work related to the Stephen Lawrence Award, has been successful in helping students to become more reflective. They have a secure awareness of a range of faiths and cultures. In spite of the unacceptably poor behaviour of some students, there is little evidence of racially motivated incidents in the school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	4
Pupils' behaviour	4
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

The overall quality of teaching is inadequate because too many lessons result in

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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students making little or no progress in their learning. In a minority of lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was judged to be good or better. Features of these lessons included: good subject knowledge; brisk pace; stimulating activities; and effective behaviour management, often as a result of strict implementation of the school's policies on behaviour. Even in lessons where teaching was judged to be satisfactory, students' behaviour was often a weakness and affected the learning of the group. Poor behaviour is a feature of almost all of the lessons where teaching is inadequate. In such lessons, the school's policies on behaviour management are not consistently applied and, consequently, too many students choose to be disruptive. Teachers' expectations of how much work students should do and how they should behave in these lessons are often too low and planning does not always identify specific outcomes for lessons.

Overall, the use of assessment is satisfactory and some improvements have been made in this area since the last inspection. Nevertheless, opportunities for students to engage in peer assessment and self-assessment are limited in the least effective lessons.

A range of improvements to the curriculum are beginning to have a positive impact in meeting the diverse needs of the school's population.

There are some strong features in the care, guidance and support provided by the school, notably the way in which staff support looked after children and the most vulnerable students. However, there are significant shortcomings in the systems for ensuring the safety and well-being of students. For example, students complained that there is no system for the confidential and anonymous reporting of bullying. Too little attention is given to making sure that students behave in a safe manner when moving around the school building. A significant number of students and parents were concerned that locked toilets and poor behaviour in the area surrounding the toilets led to these facilities being unavailable when needed, leading to discomfort and distress. The school's strategies to address the poor attendance of some students have not been fully effective. Systems for tracking incidents of poor behaviour have recently been introduced, but there is no discernable evidence of their impact on improving behaviour at present.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<p>The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</p>	<p>4</p>

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's leaders and managers have made a concerted effort to address some of

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the shortcomings highlighted in the previous inspection report, for example, in improving the use of assessment. However, they have not accurately identified the most important priorities for improvement, including remedying weaknesses in students' behaviour. The school's judgements on the quality of teaching and learning are over-generous and monitoring of classroom practice has failed to establish consistency, particularly in the implementation of behaviour management across the school. Development planning reveals a range of strategies to be implemented in the near future, but it is too early to judge the impact of these.

Governors are strongly committed to improving the school. They show a clear awareness of the school's main weaknesses and are keen for these to be addressed. Their expertise and secure knowledge in a number of areas, for example, data on students' performance, means that they are well equipped to carry out their role. However, the governing body has too little impact on the direction and work of the school and does not sufficiently hold the school to account in tackling shortcomings that lead to unsatisfactory outcomes for students.

Although a minority of parents and carers were unhappy with the extent and quality of communication between school and home, engagement with parents and carers is satisfactory overall. The school's work in tackling discrimination is satisfactory overall, and there is an ongoing commitment to the promotion of equal opportunities. The school is aware of the need to map its provision against the various elements of community cohesion and has made a satisfactory start to this work, although the impact of this has not yet been reviewed.

The school meets statutory requirements for ensuring that all adults are checked for their suitability to work with children, and all policies for safeguarding are fully compliant. Nevertheless, the school does not foster a clear enough understanding of risk among its students and does not always do enough to help students keep themselves safe.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
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	4

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Sixth form

The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good overall and this contributes to students' good achievement. From broadly average starting points students make good progress and their attainment is above the national average. In lessons students show a responsible attitude and enjoy their learning. Teachers have high expectations of students and plan a good variety of activities that promote effective learning. Programmes of study are well matched to students' needs, and although there are relatively few vocational courses on offer, the choice is improving.

Students have a good awareness of issues related to health and safety, and behave well. They say that they are well cared for and the good-quality pastoral care helps newcomers to the sixth form integrate with those moving up from Year 11. Leadership of the sixth form is fully committed to improving outcomes for students and there is a strong focus from all managers in this area of the school to ongoing improvement.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

The rate of response from parents and carers in returning the questionnaires was relatively low. Most did not include written comments, although some did praise the work of individual staff in teaching and providing pastoral support for their children. The majority of written comments on questionnaires raised concerns. The most common of these related to issues such as poor behaviour, bullying, and lack of communication between home and school. Inspectors found evidence to suggest that concerns about poor behaviour were justified. Although no explicit bullying was observed during the inspection, inspectors witnessed some intimidating behaviour, and this, coupled with anxiety voiced by a significant minority of students, indicates that parents and carers have been justified in expressing concern on this issue.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lawnswood 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 140 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,520 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	23	87	62	14	10	3	2
The school keeps my child safe	21	15	93	66	17	12	3	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	21	15	90	64	20	14	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	15	91	65	17	12	4	3
The teaching is good at this school	14	10	99	71	16	11	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	8	84	60	35	25	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	12	69	49	39	28	3	2
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)	19	14	84	60	18	13	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	11	89	64	20	14	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	11	75	54	23	16	14	10
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	10	72	51	30	21	9	6
The school is led and managed effectively	18	13	91	65	15	11	5	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	16	19	14	15	11	5	4

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.



23 September 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Lawnswood School, Leeds, LS16 5AG

On behalf of my colleagues and myself, I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and for sharing your views with us when we came to inspect your school recently. I would like to share our main findings with you.

By the end of Key Stage 4 examination results at Lawnswood are broadly average. However, for many of you the rate of progress is uneven, and is generally better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. In too many lessons the quality of learning is unsatisfactory. Sometimes this is because expectations of what you can achieve are too low, and staff do not always plan your learning precisely enough, so we have suggested that the school looks carefully at how this can be improved. However, a major factor in limiting your achievement is the behaviour of some students. We know that many of you behave very well and have respect for each other and the adults who work with you. You can act with kindness, and consideration for the safety of others. Nevertheless, we were very disappointed to see that some of you behaved badly, and in lessons this often prevented others from learning. Around the school some of you do not take sufficient care when moving around and seem unaware that such behaviour can cause injury and distress. We have asked the school to help you stay as safe as possible and to improve behaviour. Another factor affecting achievement is the poor attendance of some students and we have asked the school to find ways of improving your attendance.

There are some strengths in the work of your school. The curriculum has improved and continues to do so, and the school works with external agencies to make sure that those of you needing the most support are well cared for. The sixth form is good; standards are above average and the provision is of good quality.

We believe that Lawnswood School needs to improve as a matter of urgency and we have recommended that it is made subject to special measures. This means it will receive extra support and inspectors will return to check that the school is making the necessary improvements. You have a very important part to play in improving your school and ensuring that each one of you makes the maximum progress. You can do this by ensuring that you behave sensibly and safely at all times and attend school regularly. The staff are keen that you all fulfil your potential.

Yours faithfully

Julie Price Grimshaw

Lead inspector

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