

Lord Grey School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110531
Local Authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	337519
Inspection dates	26–27 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Peter Limm

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	1395
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Madeline Carrington
Headteacher	Tracey Jones
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2007
School address	Rickley Lane Milton Keynes MK3 6EW
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 40 lessons and 36 teachers were seen. The inspectors met with governors, groups of students and staff. A meeting was held with two representatives of the local authority and a telephone conversation was had with the school's National Challenge Adviser. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including the school's self-evaluation form, development and improvement plans, assessment data and students' work. Inspectors also scrutinised 252 questionnaires completed by parents, 117 responses from students and 41 from staff.

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

- how effectively the school has tackled weaknesses identified in the previous inspection about generating assessment data to help track and monitor students' progress
- the extent to which teaching and learning methods are sufficiently varied and interesting and informed by accurate assessment information so that they meet the needs of different groups of students
- how well leaders and managers are driving improvements in teaching and learning to bring about more rapid improvements in attainment and progress.

Information about the school

Lord Grey is a large secondary school serving an area of established housing in Bletchley, south west of Milton Keynes. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is also above the national average. The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is slightly below the national average, with no one group predominating. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2009. There has been major rebuilding since the previous inspection, although most of the original accommodation remains. Lord Grey is a specialist languages school and it added a second specialism in humanities in 2006. The school has become a Teacher Learner Academy.

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****3**

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 significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to students' achievement.

Lord Grey School has been through a turbulent period of change over the past three years and is now starting to show improvements in some areas of its work. The headteacher, appointed in September 2009, has introduced many changes. She has made new appointments to the senior leadership team and strengthened the quality of middle management at faculty level. She has also made full-time appointments of teaching staff to reduce the school's dependency on supply teachers. A number of key leadership and management systems have been introduced to improve accountability at all levels. Although it is early days, these changes are starting to have a positive impact on the life of the school and are strengthening the school's capacity to improve so that it is satisfactory. Staff morale is rising.

Attainment is low and has been for the past three years. The progress that all groups of students make, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is inadequate but improving. Achievement is thus inadequate. Although other outcomes are satisfactory and attendance is above average, there are weaknesses in managing behaviour and securing punctuality to school and lessons. Behaviour is generally satisfactory, and some is good. However, inspectors agreed with a minority of the students who responded to the questionnaire, and a small minority of parents, that low-level disruption in some lessons is a concern.

The school's data collection systems are improving. It is now possible for the school to monitor the progress of individuals and different groups of students over time much more carefully and accurately. The school uses this data to evaluate progress and to target students for intervention to improve their attainment; this is beginning to succeed in the core subjects. Target setting is now more rigorous and individual students' targets are appropriately challenging, although the school recognises that its predictions for GCSE passes have been over-inflated in the past.

Students say they have noticed a change for the better over the past year. They feel safe in school and are generally welcoming and polite. Despite students' low attainment, and loose punctuality, the school is slowly improving basic skills for key groups of students and enabling most to develop satisfactory workplace skills. The school's records show that work experience is valuable for students and growing partnerships are helping

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the school provide more vocational courses to help students prepare satisfactorily for the next stage of their lives. An increasing number remain in the school's sixth form, which provides a satisfactory education for students. Students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.

Teaching is generally satisfactory in all key stages, although not enough is good or outstanding. Teachers are using assessment information more rigorously to judge how well students are making progress. However, there remain inconsistencies in the way teachers use this information to create appropriately challenging tasks in lessons and to spark students' enthusiasm for, and engagement in, learning. The curriculum is satisfactory. At Key Stages 3 and 4 it is now better designed to meet the differing needs of students. Care, guidance and support are also satisfactory.

The headteacher and the senior leadership team have identified relevant areas for development. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and pulls no punches in identifying its main weaknesses. The school has been supported well by local authority consultants, especially in mathematics and English. School improvement is also reviewed closely by the National Challenge Adviser. Together, these sharper school reviews and tighter improvement plans are beginning to make improvements possible in several areas of the school's work. The two specialisms have made satisfactory contributions to school improvement. There are highly effective financial procedures in place but, because of the inadequate outcomes for students, the school provides inadequate value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and achievement across the school by:
 - ensuring there is a consistently high level of challenge in all lessons by using assessment information more effectively to match work to the needs of all students
 - ensuring teaching has more emphasis on developing students' competence as learners so that their interest, enthusiasm and engagement across a range of subjects are improved
 - securing better punctuality to school and to lessons
 - reducing low-level disruption in some lessons.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Attainment is low. Students' attainment when they enter the school is just below the national average. In 2009 the proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grade GCSE passes including English and mathematics fell below the government's floor target of 30% following a more successful year in 2008. Students' progress overall has been inadequate for the past two years, but the school's assessment and tracking data demonstrate better progress recently in English, and mathematics in Key Stage 4, following intensive support. There is an improving picture for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who have been given close individual support and

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are beginning to make better, though still inadequate, progress this year. In lessons observed by inspectors students' learning was variable and, although satisfactory overall, only in a few cases were students really enthused and engaged by their work to make excellent progress. There are no significant differences in learning outcomes between different gender or cultural groups.

The majority of students behave satisfactorily. There was some low-level disruption observed by inspectors in a small number of lessons. The majority of students say behaviour is much improved and any incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly. A minority of students still have some concerns. Racist incidents, which occur infrequently, are dealt with adequately. Students say they feel safe at school and that there is always an adult they can turn to if they have a problem. They have an adequate understanding of safe practices and of how to adopt healthy lifestyles. They enthusiastically participate in the wide range of physical activities on offer. Students make a satisfactory contribution to the school and wider community. They willingly take on responsibilities, for example, as members of the school council and as peer mentors. Many students make a good contribution to charities chosen through the school council. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.

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	4
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	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
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	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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How effective is the provision?

Generally, teaching is satisfactory and relationships are good. Nevertheless, the quality of teaching is not high enough to address fully the underachievement in the school. In the best lessons teachers make good use of technology and behaviour is good. Students enjoy appropriate challenge and are keen to learn. In the less successful lessons, challenge is not consistent. For example, questioning does not challenge higher-ability students to think in more detail and pace is slow because teachers talk for too long and do not allow students time to become competent learners. Where a series of activities was not well matched to learning outcomes, students often did not acquire knowledge quickly or develop their understanding securely. In these lessons, students' enjoyment in their learning, as shown by their interest, enthusiasm and engagement in activities, was limited.

In Key Stages 3 and 4 the curriculum is adequately matched to students' needs, offering a satisfactory range of opportunities to gain qualifications. However, these improvements have not had time to have an impact on outcomes. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall, as are day-to-day care and the arrangements to ensure that students are safeguarded. A range of interventions available for students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that they are adequately supported during their time in the school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leadership team have worked effectively to engender a common sense of purpose across the school community. This commitment is increasingly evident at all levels and in all aspects of the school. Heads of faculty have started to tackle robustly less effective teaching through a range of strategies, including coaching. This is starting to have a positive impact on the overall quality of teaching and learning. Leaders have undertaken a thorough analysis of the school's performance and are setting increasingly challenging targets. Expectations of both staff and students are higher than previously, and current planning reflects this. Monitoring systems for key aspects of the school's work are in place but have not had sufficient time to have a marked impact on attainment and progress. Performance management and professional development for individual staff are improving, and the school's status as a Teacher

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Learner Academy enables a growing number of staff to improve their professional expertise. The growing strengths in leadership and management at different levels also extend to the sixth form.

The governing body has now taken action to monitor the school effectively, although these systems have not been in place for sufficient time to make a marked difference to outcomes for students. The leadership and management systems in the sixth form are satisfactory. The school has begun to seek the views of parents more regularly and a recent return indicates it receives full and frank feedback. There is a growing range of partnerships that support students adequately both with their learning and in their personal development and well-being. The school has satisfactory systems in place for monitoring safeguarding. The school promotes community cohesion adequately. The school's work on promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination is satisfactory: this is evident in the way that groups of students are identified and monitored for their inclusion in school life.

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
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	4

Sixth form

The sixth form accepts students with a wide range of ability and is part of the Milton Keynes South Sixth Form partnership. Attainment by the end of Year 13 is below average but this represents satisfactory progress. The curriculum is adequate and is extended by partnerships with other post-16 providers in the local area that allow students to choose from a wider range of courses to meet their needs. Extra-curricular activities are limited. Students are making satisfactory progress, although it is better at

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AS level than at A level and achievement is not consistent across subjects. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with the best lessons involving students actively and encouraging independent learning. Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory and improving. There are increasingly robust procedures in place to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and to track students' progress. Systems for monitoring attendance are satisfactory. Students say they are consulted well and are regularly provided with systematic and well-informed guidance. They play a full part in the life of the school. Students enjoy being in the sixth form and one said: 'I stayed in this sixth form because of the comfortable atmosphere and the knowledge that teachers will help me to do well.'

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

Questionnaire responses show that the school engages satisfactorily with parents and carers. A large majority are happy with their child's experience at the school and a majority think the school is now led and managed effectively. Most agree that their children are kept safe. A small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about poor behaviour of some students in lessons. Inspectors found that behaviour around the school was satisfactory but in a few lessons a small minority of students misbehaves, mostly when they are not engaged with lesson activities. Although a majority of parents thought that teaching was good, a significant minority disagreed. Inspectors found some lessons did not focus clearly enough on what students should learn and have asked the school to address this.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lord Grey 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 252 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1395 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	44	17	154	61	39	15	13	5
The school keeps my child safe	46	18	179	71	20	8	6	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	47	19	153	61	33	12	16	6
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	13	128	51	67	27	16	6
The teaching is good at this school	18	7	137	54	58	23	24	10
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	6	140	56	64	25	17	7
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	8	156	62	52	21	4	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)	25	10	139	55	46	18	12	5
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	10	146	58	57	23	13	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	14	135	54	40	16	28	11
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	9	132	52	53	21	14	6
The school is led and managed effectively	25	10	135	54	56	22	12	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	13	135	54	59	23	17	7

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



28 May 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Lord Grey School, Bletchley MK3 6EW

I would like to thank you all on behalf of the inspection team for the warm welcome we received when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing your work.

We found that your school needs to make significant improvements in some areas, so we have given it a 'notice to improve'. This means that inspectors will visit the school to check on improvements being made. Attainment is currently much lower than average and the overall progress which you make is not as good as it should be. Your attendance is above average but many of you arrive late for school and to lessons. Your behaviour is satisfactory and is improving, making the school a safe place to be. However, we agreed with a minority of you and your parents who were concerned about behaviour and have asked the school to reduce the low-level disruption that occurs in some lessons. You make a satisfactory contribution to the wider community around the school.

We were encouraged to see that the new headteacher, her senior leadership team and other staff are starting to implement plans to improve many areas of the school, including the quality of teaching. It is, however, early days and many of these plans have not been in place long enough to affect important outcomes, such as examination results.

We have asked the school to concentrate on the following areas so that the quality of education can improve rapidly:

Raise your attainment and achievement across the school by:

- ensuring there is the right amount of challenge in all your lessons
- asking more teachers to pay extra attention to how well you learn things and make learning more interesting
- improving your punctuality to school and lessons
- reducing low-level disruption in some of your lessons.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Peter Limm

Her Majesty's Inspector

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