

Leysland High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120272
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	339661
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Clive Kempton 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	11–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	569
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Spencer
Headteacher	Keith McDermott
Date of previous school inspection	12 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors, one of whom focused on ensuring that safeguarding requirements were fully met. The inspectors visited 19 lessons, and held meetings with the chair of governors and two other governors, 12 senior/middle leaders, six groups of students, and five parents. They observed the school's work, and met with external agencies, including a phone call with the school improvement partner and a group of nine outside professionals associated with the school. They scrutinised 338 parent questionnaires (the responses are shown in the annex to this report) as well as staff and student questionnaires.

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

- what is the quality of school improvement planning at all management levels
- how good are attainment and progress
- how good is behaviour, particularly boys
- how good is the quality of teaching particularly in English and mathematics

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average. It takes pupils from a wide geographical area in Blaby, Countesthorpe and surrounding villages, as well as significant numbers from the City of Leicester. The school will become a specialist technology college from September 2010 in partnership with its upper school on the same campus and another high school. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational need is above average. The school population is largely White British and very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. None are at the early stages of learning English. Since the last inspection the school has received a number of awards: Governor Mark, Healthy Schools, Eco School, Sports Mark, Diana Anti-Bullying Award, Career Mark, International School Award and re-accreditation for Investor in People.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Leysland High is an outstanding school that has made good progress since its last inspection. It is a happy school where pupils thrive. The school has many significant strengths:

- pupils attain high standards
- pupils make good progress from their starting points when they join the school
- pupils make outstanding progress in science, art and history
- pupils greatly enjoy coming to school and attendance is well above the national average
- pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school
- pupils are well-prepared for the next stage in their learning
- pupils with specific needs are well supported
- the school places equal emphasis on the high quality personal development of pupils
- the school provides a very safe and caring learning environment
- most of the teaching is good or outstanding

The headteacher and staff have worked very hard to create a stimulating learning environment for all pupils. The display of pupils' work and other learning stimuli are of high quality. This coupled with the demonstrable strength of relationships between staff and pupils means that learning is at the heart of the school. The school motto, 'Quality Education in a Caring Community' is a reality.

The school has maintained high pupil attainment over a number of years due to the good quality of the teaching in most lessons. Some minor inconsistencies remain, for example in the application of the school marking policy and in teachers' planning, which is not always clear enough about how the learning in each activity will develop. Leadership at all levels rigorously monitors and evaluates the quality of its work and detailed action points are followed up with subject leaders to ensure that all pupils make progress. However, the whole school development plan is over-complex and lacks sufficient clarity. This means that governors and parents are unable to measure the impact of key priorities. Leaders and managers collectively demonstrate an outstanding capacity to improve and act on the few minor issues raised by this inspection. The school knows itself well and has demonstrated over time its ability to tackle key issues, for example in improving pupil attendance, behaviour, and the quality of teaching.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching is good or outstanding by:

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- consistently applying the school's marking policy
- ensuring that teachers' lesson plans specify the learning in each activity in progressive steps
- Ensure that the school development plan has clear and measurable success criteria which enables governors and parents to measure the progress the school is making.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. By the time pupils leave Year 9 their attainment is high, especially in science where progress is outstanding. In English and mathematics, the progress made by all groups of pupils is good, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In lessons, pupils were seen making good progress and achieving well across a wide range of subjects, especially in art and history.

Pupils are keen to learn, behave very well and work hard, which makes a positive contribution to their excellent achievement. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their high attendance and high uptake of clubs. Pupils are very knowledgeable about how to stay safe and healthy. They are proud of their school and the many opportunities it provides for them. Pupils make an excellent contribution to school life through the school and eco-councils. The support provided by Year 9 for new pupils in Year 7 is impressive. For example, they act as reading buddies and some are attached to each new tutor group in the Approachable, Sensible, Kind (ASK) programme. This develops self confident and articulate young people. The wide range of activities to support the many world-wide charitable causes is outstanding, since many are organised by the pupils themselves. They develop an excellent work ethic which prepares them very well for the next stage in their education and later life. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, although first hand experiences of life in British, diverse, cultural society is currently more limited.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1

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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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Pupils' very positive attitudes and behaviour are key features in the majority of lessons and make a strong contribution to their good learning. Teachers and pupils enjoy warm relationships in a climate conducive to learning. In the most successful lessons, clear objectives are based on an accurate knowledge of pupils' prior learning and tasks are carefully matched to planned learning outcomes. As a result, all pupils make at least good progress. Many lessons contribute to learning outside of the subject discipline. For example, an outstanding Year 9 poetry lesson promoted spirituality through the skilful use of imagery to illustrate the power of words. Pupils empathised with the characters and the emotions within the text. Aspects of teaching in a few lessons restricted opportunities for pupils to make good or better progress. In these lessons teachers talked too much, and the planning of learning outcomes was not sufficiently matched to the range of learning needs to ensure the good progress of all pupils. In all lessons, pupils are aware of their levels and their targets. While information on how to improve is given through oral feedback in lessons, teachers' marking is sometimes less effective because of minor inconsistencies in the application of the school's marking policy.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets all statutory requirements. It enables all pupils to make at least good progress in line with their abilities. For those who are experiencing difficulties in fully participating in school life, the Personalised Learning Centre provides outstanding opportunities for both academic and personal development. Pupils who need extra help to improve their reading and number skills are taught in small groups and are proud of the progress they make which, in some cases, is exceptional. The personal development curriculum is a real strength. It makes a very important contribution to the ethos of the school and to the pupils' excellent preparation for the next phase of their lives. All pupils benefit from a truly extensive range of extra-curricular activities.

The school's total commitment to the welfare of its pupils is evident and it provides a high level of support for all of them, including those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who are vulnerable. The work of the pastoral team has contributed greatly to the establishment of an extremely positive climate for learning. Highly effective support is in place for those whose behaviour puts them at risk of exclusion, so that only two have been excluded in recent years. Year 7 pupils are successfully

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integrated into the school through a comprehensive transition programme and Year 9 pupils are very well prepared for their transition to the partner upper school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management has many strengths. The headteacher is well-respected and leads with vision and purpose. He is very well supported by an excellent senior team and middle leaders. There is a tangible sense of collective leadership, where all support each other to embed ambition and drive improvement. One recently appointed teacher summed this up, 'we all pull together and work together and that's what makes Leysland different'. Middle leaders have individual responsibility for improving attainment in their subject area and are rigorously held to account by the senior team through departmental reviews and structured line management meetings. Subject leaders are clear about their priorities and when they have been achieved. However, this level of clarity about the priority actions, their measurable success criteria and time scales are not so well defined in a whole school development plan that all staff can engage with. This is the key factor which currently limits the efficiency of leadership and management in the school.

The school's inclusive approach is highly effective in promoting equality and tackling discrimination. All groups of pupils make at least good progress, are well supported by an appropriate curriculum and the schools' policies promote the school's mantra, 'learn and let others learn'.

Safeguarding procedures are outstanding. The school's arrangements for ensuring the safety of its pupils are fully in place. All staff receive highly relevant guidance on safe practice in school and along with governors have received very good training, in particular on child protection. As a result there is a realistic and proportionate approach to safety and safeguarding in the school.

Community cohesion is good. The school itself is a cohesive community. It has promoted a deep understanding of its local community and beyond. Its actions have a beneficial impact on community cohesion. For example, whilst just developing, pupils visit a school in a very different city context in order to appreciate cultural diversity and an international link is being forged with a school in India. The newly acquired specialist technology college status aims to further develop these and other links.

Partnerships with other local schools, organisations, and services are strong. One

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professional partner associated with the school described it as, 'Leysland is an excellent school. It provides excellent support to the individual'. Parents too, are very positive about the school. One commented that the school provided 'a great pathway towards becoming a young adult'.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

A large number of questionnaires were returned from parents and carers as part of this inspection. The overwhelming response was positive about the school (95%), especially the way the school keeps their child safe (98%). Two questions generated less positive responses: behaviour and how the school takes account of parents' suggestions and concerns. These issues were followed up by inspectors. A meeting was held with a group of parents and carers to pursue these and other concerns during the inspection. Inspectors judged that behaviour in lessons and around the school was exemplary. Pupils were always attentive, polite and considerate.

In discussion, some parents and carers were of the opinion that the school did indeed take account of their views if they made contact to discuss their concerns. They felt that some parents and carers may not be fully aware that the school is receptive to their views and welcomes their comments. This issue was discussed with the headteacher who has agreed to re-enforce the open door policy of the school in the next Leysland Link Newsletter.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Leysland High 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 338 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 569 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	100	29	207	61	30	9	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	120	35	212	63	5	1	1	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	123	36	188	56	25	7	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	120	35	196	58	20	6	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	102	30	219	65	12	4	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	73	22	215	64	38	11	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	61	18	235	70	34	10	1	0
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)	87	26	210	62	22	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	92	27	220	65	22	6	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	94	28	191	56	31	9	6	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	69	20	202	60	37	11	4	1
The school is led and managed effectively	97	29	216	64	12	4	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	126	37	197	58	12	4	1	0

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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.



24 June 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Leysland High School, Leicester, LE8 5PR

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me and the other inspectors when we visited your school earlier this term. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and watching you learn. I thought you would like to know the outcome of the inspection and what you could all do to make it even better.

You go to an outstanding school that has many strengths. You all behave well in class and around the school and the teachers work hard to prepare interesting and exciting lessons for you. You attain high standards by the time you leave the school, better than most schools in the country. Your positive attitudes to learning and your exemplary behaviour and attendance show us that you enjoy school and want to learn. You develop outstanding personal skills too, and learn to empathise with others through your charity work and PSHE lessons. This develops you as a whole person and prepares you well to become an active and good citizen. Those of you who have specific needs are well supported by adults in the school and provided with a wide variety of interesting learning opportunities such as the gardening and building groups. The school organises a lot of trips to extend your learning or challenge the more able, such as visits to universities and master classes in the upper school. There are a lot of clubs and activities for you to take part in and all of you have been to at least one this year. This is very impressive and shows how much you appreciate the additional time staff devote to these activities.

Your school is well led by the headteacher and the leadership team who are passionate about all of you achieving your potential.

Even outstanding schools have areas that they can work on and I have asked your headteacher and senior staff to do the following things:

- ensure all teaching is as good as the best
- ensure that the school's plans have measurable targets.

I wish you all the best of luck for the future. Keep trying your hardest and enjoy your special time at Leysland.

Clive Kempton HMI

Her Majesty's Inspector

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