

North Leamington School

Sandy Lane, Blackdown, Leamington Spa, CV32 6RD

Inspection dates	11–12 February 2014		
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Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good		2
Quality of teaching	Good		2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good		2
Leadership and management	Good		2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students' attainment is improving. They do well at GCSE. They achieve significantly above the national average in most subjects; including in science, English language and literature, German and geography.
- The progress of the vast majority of students is significantly better than the national average. The progress of those who are eligible for the pupil premium is improving,
- The sixth form is good. Students' attainment and achievement in the sixth form has improved since the last inspection and the majority make good progress.
- Students behave well in lessons and around school. Their attendance has improved and they are punctual to lessons.
- Students say they feel safe in school.
- Leaders have high expectations of students and teachers. Successful actions to improve teaching in all subjects, in particular in mathematics and English, indicate the very positive impact leaders have had.
- The curriculum ensures that students have a wide range of excellent opportunities to meet their needs and interests and promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although attainment is improving, some inconsistency remains. For example, in 2012, too few students made the expected progress in mathematics and few students made better than expected progress in English.
- The gap between the achievement of students known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are not is narrowing but has been too wide over recent years.
- The level of challenge in some lessons is not always high enough to ensure all students make rapid progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 47 lessons and parts of lessons, including five with members of the senior leadership team. Two further observations were undertaken with the headteacher and the special needs coordinator, respectively. During these observations many classes were visited briefly to look at specific aspects of the work of the school. Inspectors observed students' behaviour both in and out of lessons.
- Inspectors held meetings with staff, students, parents and carers, members of the governing body and representatives of the local authority.
- The views of 200 parents and carers who responded to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, were considered. The results of 76 staff questionnaires were analysed.
- Inspectors analysed data about students' performance and progress. They reviewed a range of documents, records and development plans. These included minutes of governing body meetings, staff performance management targets and records about safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and exclusions.

Inspection team

Michelle Parker, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Gulbanu Kader	Additional Inspector
Susan Thomas	Additional Inspector
Stephen Howland	Additional Inspector
Kevin Harrison	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- North Leamington School is a larger than average secondary school.
- The vast majority of students are White British. Other students come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being Indian. A small number of students join the school speaking English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, the additional funding provided by the government for looked-after children, students known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families, is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above the national average.
- A small group of students in Year 10 and 11 attend for one day a week at Warwickshire College, WAYC or Hy Brid Arts for a variety of vocational qualifications.
- The school is no longer a Specialist Arts College. It achieved full International School status in August 2013. It successfully completed the Connecting School's Partnership in January 2013.
- The school met the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement further by:
 - ensuring the consistently high attainment and good progress of all groups of students
 - closing further the gap in attainment and progress between students known to be eligible for the pupil premium and those who are not.
- Further improve the quality of teaching by:
 - raising the level of challenge in every lesson, so that all students achieve their potential.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment and progress at the end of Key Stage 4 continues to improve in the majority of subjects. It has been less well sustained in English. However, in 2013, 60% of students gained 5 A*- C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, which is above the national average.
- Students join the school in Year 7 with standards that are broadly in line with expectations. The majority of students who completed Key Stage 4 in 2013, including the most able, those who have a disability and those with special educational needs made better than expected progress in nearly all subjects. The school's current progress information indicates that more students are on track to make expected and better than expected progress in English and mathematics. Inspectors' observations of learning and scrutiny of work in English, mathematics and science confirmed that the majority of students in Key Stage 4 are now making at least good progress.
- The gap in attainment and progress between students eligible for the pupil premium funding and those who are not has, until recently, been too wide. In 2013, for example, these students' attainment was more than half a grade below that of others in GCSE English and a grade below in mathematics. However, the available evidence suggests that more recently this gap has narrowed significantly, indicating that the additional funding and the initiatives it supports are making a good contribution to improving the progress of these students.
- Attainment in the sixth form has improved over the last three years. The proportion of students gaining A*-B grades has improved from 37% to 45% with a 100% pass rate. Results have improved at the end of Year 12 for AS and vocational courses. The progress of all sixth-form students in GCSEs and vocational courses has improved, and a greater proportion are making better than expected progress. The retention of students into Year 13 has improved significantly, as all students now complete their courses. In the lessons observed, students' made rapid gains in their understanding.
- In the majority of lessons observed, students made good progress in their learning, including those for whom English is an additional language. Students explain their ideas well using language specific to the subject and produce work of a good standard. The emphasis on improving writing across all subjects was seen in students' work. Their spelling, punctuation and grammar are each improving because students routinely check them. The presentation of work has improved. Occasionally, students do not complete their corrections and lose the opportunity to learn from their mistakes.
- The Year 7 catch-up programmes in English and mathematics are having a positive impact on helping younger students' make better progress. Students' reading levels are routinely monitored. Where required, a range of interventions is tailored to students' needs, leading to improvements in reading skills. Students read widely and more often because of the school's greater emphasis on the importance of reading. They are also able to apply their learning in mathematics and science across other subjects.
- The achievement of students who attend off-site provision is good. The provision helps them improve their work-based skills and potential employability.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and this was reflected in the lessons observed, including in English and

mathematics. The strong focus on improving literacy was evident in teachers' marking and the improved accuracy of spelling and punctuation in students' work. The school's new marking policy is bearing fruit, as teachers help students improve their work. However, students do not routinely complete their corrections.

- Lessons are well planned. Teachers make good use of their subject knowledge to interest students and plan activities that engage them well. In the vast majority of lessons, the pace of lessons was well judged. In the best lessons, teachers' skilful use of questioning probed students' thinking and identified misconceptions, enabling them to re-shape their plans. Discussions between teachers and students following assessments of work enable students to have an accurate view of their strengths and areas to improve.
- Teachers use a variety of different approaches to teaching to engage students of all abilities, except, at times, for the most-able. Strategies to support lower attaining students and those who have a disability and/or special educational needs are effective. This is because teachers provide clearly structured work to help such pupils learn. Time in each lesson is given to students to speak and listen to others and this helps students with their writing. Teaching assistants are included in the planning stage of lessons, so they are clear about what is to be learned and support students effectively. Interventions to support students with special educational needs are also well prepared. Students explained that the teaching of English in Year 11 in single sex groups is improving their concentration and confidence.
- Sixth form teaching is good. Students discuss their thinking and challenge each other's ideas. Work is stimulating and demanding and prepares students well for the next stage of education, training or employment. High quality feedback of students' work during lessons and following assessment enables them to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. Students wear their uniform with pride. This is a reflection of the school's strong, positive ethos. Students have good attitudes to learning and this is evident in their engagement and the lack of disruptive behaviour in lessons. Students' own view of behaviour is that it is good. Students arrive promptly to lessons, well prepared to learn and with the correct equipment. They respond promptly to staff's instructions.
- Staff deploy an effective range of behaviour management strategies. These ensure a calm and purposeful learning environment. The balance of rewards and sanctions ensures that students want to do well and value the positive support they receive from staff.
- Students take care of the school buildings and resources. There is little litter around the site. Despite inclement weather during the inspection, students maintained mature and respectful attitudes towards each other and staff.
- Students have a good awareness of different types of bullying and respect each other's differences. Occurrences of bullying are rare and students explained that staff deal with them effectively. Students feel valued by staff who, they say, are always prepared to listen to them and take account of their views and feelings.
- Fixed-term exclusions are very rare and the evidence shows that they are imposed only exceptional circumstances. This reflects the marked improvement in the management of challenging behaviour. Attendance is above average. It has improved because of the work of the home-school liaison manager and because the school takes an appropriately firm line on

absences.

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Staff ensure that students are safe when they attend alternative provision and the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided after school. The school works effectively with a wide range of outside agencies to ensure that students receive the care and support they need.
- Improved information, advice and guidance is available to students. This ensures that students going into the sixth form undertake courses better matched to their needs and aspirations. Retention rates into Year 13 have increased as a result. The take up of sixth-form bursaries has increased because the sixth form now attracts a more diverse group of students. Consequently, 100% of the students have gone onto A-level courses from AS courses. Increasing numbers of students choose vocational qualifications that better match their interests and equip them well for their next stage of education, training or employment.

The leadership and management are good

- Staff share the headteacher's passion and commitment for students and their learning. The staff questionnaire indicated the pride staff take in the school and its ethos. The steady improvements in the school reflect the ambition of leaders at all levels to make the school the best it can be.
- School self-evaluation and improvement planning take account of a wide range of data, enabling senior leaders, governors and middle managers to develop an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use self-evaluation to promote improvement. Robust quality assurance is embedded across the school. Staff development is based on this analysis and linked to robust performance management targets.
- All teaching staff have challenging targets for the progress of the groups of students they teach and staff who have management responsibilities have appropriate targets for their role. Line management responsibilities have been re-organised and tightened up, and this has enabled middle managers to better hold staff to account. The impact of this has begun to move a greater proportion of teaching from good to outstanding.
- The role of middle leaders has been strengthened since the last inspection to ensure they have better quality data and information on the progress of sixth form students. This has strengthened the quality assurance processes in the sixth form. Middle leaders regularly and effectively monitor the quality of provision in their areas of responsibility to ensure it promotes good achievement and high quality care for all students.
- The re-structuring of the school's pastoral care systems into colleges, and the meetings with senior and teaching staff, ensure the progress and well-being of students are monitored effectively.
- The curriculum is imaginative and builds on the strengths of the school's rich arts heritage to provide well for the changing needs of students. It provides rich experiences that enhance students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding and prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Links through the International School work enable a strong focus on broadening students' horizons and improving their awareness of global issues and cultural diversity.
- Off-site provision involves a range of vocational courses that enable less academic students to gain success. The impact of the school's drive to improve literacy is evident in students reading

more frequently and the improvement in their reading scores in Years 7 and 8. The increase in the number of English and mathematics teachers has improved the capacity of the school to drive up standards and support literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.

- The sixth form is well led. The study programme has been carefully reorganised to meet the needs of students and provide them with opportunities to gain relevant academic qualifications and work-related learning skills. Careful monitoring of students' progress and attendance ensures that they are on track to succeed.
- The school's systems to ensure the safety of all its students meet all statutory requirements.
- A high proportion of parents and carers responded to Parent View. The vast majority of responses are very positive about all aspects of the school and their child's education.
- The school plays an effective part in working with and supporting other schools in the local area.
- The local authority appropriately challenges the school and provides support as and when requested by the school leaders.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are an integral part of the school's monitoring process. They use their professional expertise and skills to challenge school leaders and are critical of any underperformance. Governors are confident using a wide range of data, including national comparisons, the data dashboard and regular information about students' progress to hold school leaders to account.
- They set the headteacher ambitious targets for each academic year and complete rigorous reviews as part of the performance management process. Governors understand the importance of performance management to promote better teaching, support improvements in students' progress and rewarding good performance. They ensure systems are rigorous and applied to all staff.
- Governors carefully monitor the funding to ensure it provides the maximum value for money. Additional funding for students eligible for the pupil premium, those students who have disabilities and/or special learning needs and other vulnerable students are carefully monitored and leaders are held to account for their progress, attendance and behaviour.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	125748
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	433307

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Comprehensive
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	1212
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Boad
Headteacher	Joy Mitchell
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2011
Telephone number	01926 338711
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