

Liskeard School and Community College

Luxstowe, Liskeard, Cornwall, PL14 3EA

Inspection dates

21–22 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- The school prides itself on being a community school and has worked hard to build excellent relationships with the local community and businesses.
- Most teaching is good or better, and so the majority of students make good progress and examination results are improving each year.
- The sixth form is good. Examination results are above the national average and improving so that the vast majority of students are able to progress to their chosen pathways.
- The students are offered an extensive range of extra-curricular activities. There are opportunities and experiences in sports, performing and expressive arts, visits abroad, residential visits and more areas.
- Leadership and management are extremely good. All leaders have the highest expectations for students, so that achievement will be raised further. The governing body provides high-quality support for the school's leadership team and sets appropriate challenges for the school.
- Relationships throughout the school are strong. Students behave well and feel safe in a secure environment.
- The curriculum is broad and varied. The wide range of courses provides all students with opportunities to gain appropriate qualifications.
- The school's specialism, engineering, gives an excellent opportunity to students to take vocational courses, and also encourages the development of leadership and problem-solving skills.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The leadership and management of mathematics, in particular, need to be strengthened to promote more progress by students in the subject and further improve GCSE results.
- The school is developing its strategies to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and improve the skills of students as independent learners, promoting further progress and more improvements in examination results.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 34 lessons, six of which were observed jointly with members of the school’s senior leadership team. In addition, inspectors made several short visits to lessons and to the school’s Special Educational Needs Centre.
- Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body, local authority, the school’s independent advisor, staff, and groups of students.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work, attended an assembly, and looked at samples of students’ work. They also looked at progress data, documents about school development and evaluation, safeguarding information and records about attendance and behaviour. The records showing the impact of professional development for staff were also examined.
- The views of parents as expressed in 57 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account, as were the responses made by staff in questionnaires completed at the beginning of the inspection.

Inspection team

Ann Cox, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Justine Hocking	Additional inspector
Joseph Skivington	Additional inspector
Susan Smith	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Liskeard School and Community College is an average-sized secondary school with a sixth form serving the town of Liskeard in South East Cornwall and the surrounding area. The school roll has fallen significantly in recent years because there are fewer students in the secondary age range living in the area.
- The school is part of the Liskeard Community Cooperative Learning Trust, working in partnership with its primary schools, the local authority, The University College of St Mark and St John, Plymouth and the business sector.
- The school works collaboratively with nearby schools and colleges as a part of the South East Cornwall Partnership, and so gives students access to a wide range of courses.
- A small number of students in Key Stage 4 attend vocational (work-related) courses at local schools and colleges, including Duchy College, Cornwall College, Caradon Short Stay School and Restormel Short Stay School. There is also provision for some students with Riding for the Disabled.
- The school specialises in engineering; it has bespoke facilities on the main site and an off-site unit for teaching the specialism.
- Almost all students are White British and very few have English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding, is equal to the national average.
- The proportion of students with special educational needs who are supported at school action is slightly above the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is close to the national average. The school has an on-site specially resourced provision for students with autism, known as 'The ARC'.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is a nursery unit on the school site; it is run as a commercial enterprise and is inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress of students in mathematics by strengthening the leadership of the subject.
- Ensure that the proportion of outstanding teaching is increased by:
 - planning lessons to promote greater student autonomy and independence
 - ensuring that students respond quickly to teachers' marking and understand how they can improve their learning
 - increasing the pace so that there is swift progress in all lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students enter the school with standards in English and mathematics which are consistently below the national average for Key Stage 2. At the end of Key Stage 4, GCSE results have improved over three years and overall are now close to national average.
- The proportions of students gaining the highest GCSE grades of A* or A in English have improved and are now well above the national average.
- Given their starting points, the majority of students make progress in English which compares well to national average. In mathematics, improvements have been steady and the rate of improvement is increasing from a low starting point at the time of the last inspection. Teachers and teaching assistants support students with statements of special educational needs effectively so that they make good progress and achieve well compared to similar students nationally.
- The progress data for students currently in Year 11 indicate that there will be a further improvement in GCSE results, especially in GCSE mathematics.
- The provision for disabled students and those with special educational needs has been strengthened and currently students with statements of educational need make better-than-average progress. All groups of students are making progress more rapidly compared to three years ago, making the same good progress as others in the college.
- The school has used the pupil premium funding in a variety of ways, such as ensuring that students can participate in additional activities, and are provided with additional materials such as revision guides. Recent examination results show that this group of students does not perform as well as other students, mirroring the position for this group seen nationally. The school is looking carefully at additional ways to help these students in lessons, thus closing gaps in achievement between this group and their peers. Based on average point scores at the end of Key Stage 4, the gap between the students entitled to pupil premium support and those not is equivalent to about one GCSE grade lower in both mathematics and English. Because the progress of both groups is improving it means that the gap between them is not yet closing.
- Good attention is given to encouraging students to develop their literacy skills, and most students develop into confident readers. For those who are experiencing difficulty, the 'synthetic phonics' system is used to good effect.
- The school enters some students early for GCSE examinations in mathematics in the belief that the early experience helps to build the confidence of these students.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good and improving. The starting points from GCSE in recent years have been below national average, and progress from this starting point is very good. Recent A-level results were significantly above the national average overall and were particularly strong in business studies, English language, English literature and history. The proportion of students who gain the highest grades of A* to B is above the national average. A consistently large majority of sixth form students progress to university education.
- The school's specialist status in engineering is reflected in the proportion of students who successfully gain related qualifications. Success has been such that students who were aiming for level 1 qualifications have subsequently gained higher qualifications at Level 2. Students make good progress in all the settings that pupils work in on and off site.
- A small proportion of students in Key Stage 4 receive vocational (work-related) training at other centres on one day a week, and this ensures that they leave school with appropriate qualifications, such as those in hairdressing.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The school has focused on improving the quality of teaching since the last inspection. Evidence

shows that the quality of teaching over time is now good. During the inspection, most of the teaching observed was good or outstanding, and this observation is reflected in the school's own monitoring records. Some outstanding teaching was seen across different subjects and in different year groups. As a result of the developments in teaching, the rate of progress by students has also shown significant improvement.

- The leadership of teaching has been resolute in removing inadequate teaching and reducing practice requiring improvement. When inspectors made joint observations with senior leaders, there was close agreement about the quality of teaching observed, and no inadequate teaching was observed during the inspection.
- Students and parents have high regard for the standards of teaching. Teachers make considerable efforts to make lessons as interesting as possible. The attitude of students to learning is good, and supportive relationships between adults and students generate a positive environment for learning. Teachers have high expectations and students respond well to this. In an engineering lesson, an inspector witnessed a student acting as a safety officer, a responsibility which was dealt with maturely and effectively.
- Information about students is well used by teachers to ensure that students are set tasks to promote their progress. The use of seating plans which are clearly annotated with information about each student's target and current grade enables teachers to check their progress manner.
- Teaching in the sixth form is consistently good or outstanding across all subjects. Teachers use strategies effectively to promote independent and group learning. The detailed tracking of students, assessment and marking all contribute to the very good progress made by students in the sixth form.
- Where students have special educational needs, their teachers are provided with high-quality personalised information about their needs and strategies which are known to be helpful to the individual. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and there is a careful balance between supporting students and enabling them to be independent.
- The ARC unit, which assists students with autism, is a positive asset for the school. There is an emphasis on supporting the inclusion of students in mainstream classes wherever that is possible.
- Teachers look at students' work regularly, but the quality of marking and assessment is variable. In some cases, the feedback written by teachers is very thorough, but inspectors did not see many examples of students responding directly to the advice they were given. Some written feedback is not sufficiently precise and does not give students advice about what they need to do to make improvements.
- The pace of some lessons is not as quick as it could be, and so some students make less progress than they should. When the activities are too directed by teachers, there is insufficient stretching of the students, and they are not developing into independent learners.
- Throughout the school, there are examples of emphasis on developing literacy. Students are encouraged to use technology to discover more, and this appeals to them in a very real way. The promotion of mathematics across the curriculum is not yet as well developed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Positive and productive relationships are a strong feature of the school. The behaviour of students towards each other, to members of staff and to visitors is polite and positive. Students are articulate and willing to help each other; relationships between students and adults are generally very good and promote a positive ethos for learning. An inspector witnessed a good example of this in a mathematics lesson where some students volunteered to help other students who were having some difficulties.
 - The attitude of students to learning is good. The vast majority of students are keen to achieve
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well and so they respond positively to the help that is offered to them throughout the school.

- Two years ago, the school focused on systems for managing behaviour, and improvements are clear. Most members of the school community say that behaviour is consistently good, though there are some areas of inconsistency still to be tackled.
- Attendance has improved in the last two years, but is still slightly below the national average. The school monitors attendance carefully and is actively working on strategies to bring about further improvements.
- Students are well informed about different forms of bullying and the school takes steps to ensure that anti-social behaviour and unnecessary risks are minimised. Anti-bullying events and updates to students and their families about minimising cyber-safety risks are a regular feature. Students are sensitive about issues such as racism and homophobic bullying and they have a good understanding of potential hazards, including alcohol or substance abuse.
- Students feel safe at school. There are few instances of bullying reported in the school and on the rare occasions when there is an issue, the school deals with it swiftly and effectively. Students report that they have complete confidence in the school to deal with any matters which are reported.
- When older students attend courses at other centres, their attendance is carefully checked, as are all aspects of ensuring their safety and well-being.
- The number of exclusions is in line with national averages. The sanction is used only when necessary as an appropriate response to extreme behaviour. A programme of interventions and support is used to avoid exclusions where possible, and to successfully re-admit students where the sanction has been used.

The leadership and management are good

- The school is extremely well led by the headteacher, who has been unrelenting in pursuit of improvements to raise standards across the school. This has led to much better progress by students and improved examination results year after year.
- The headteacher is very well supported with a team of senior leaders and middle managers, all of whom share the same goal of improvement across the school. All leaders clearly communicate high expectations and ambition for the school and its students.
- Since the last inspection, teaching has improved and this has been brought about by careful planning and thorough monitoring of teaching, and focused professional development for teachers and other members of staff.
- The leadership of mathematics requires strengthening. Currently, a senior leader has temporarily taken on the role as an additional responsibility while the school seeks an enduring resolution for the issue.
- The school's own evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is accurate and thorough. Improvements are systematically planned and constant checks are made to ensure that there is an impact on improvement and students' progress.
- Policies and procedures are in place, with a focus on literacy across the curriculum. This has been embraced across the school and inspectors saw examples of the promotion of literacy in all areas of the school.
- The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum with access to a wide range of courses in various subjects and vocational fields at appropriate levels. The needs of students of all abilities are catered for, including disabled students and those with special educational needs.
- The school ensures that there is equality of opportunity for students.
- The school works well with parents and the community as a whole. The school regularly invites parents and community members to coffee mornings to provide an opportunity for discussions and an exchange of views.

- Students are given a wide range of experiences to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students have opportunities to visit schools in Uganda and London to widen their experiences, and a further example is a focus on Fairtrade issues. A parent wrote to inspectors and praised 'a wide array of extra school activities'.
 - The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements and record keeping is exemplary.
 - Local authority representatives regularly visit the school and offer appropriate support to ensure that it can continue to improve.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body enthusiastically supports the work of the school. Members of the governing body have a wide range of expertise. The governing body is able to support and challenge the school's leaders extremely well. Members of the governing body undertake regular training and make use of the services of independent consultants in order to ensure that they are able to hold the school to account on all matters. Governors have excellent links with parents and other community members. They are extremely well informed about the performance of students, receiving information from the school's staff and also using data analyses produced by the government. The governing body is well acquainted with the performance of the school's students and groups of students against national indicators. The governing body has a clear awareness of the standards of teaching across the school and has an overview of the arrangements and outcomes of performance management. They have supported the school's action in ensuring that teachers' salary progression is linked to the progress of their students.

The governing body is careful to monitor the spending of all the funding available to the school, including the pupil premium fund.
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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	112061
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	405373

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	1,025
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	250
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Davina Finch
Headteacher	Donna Bryant
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 March 2011
Telephone number	01579 342344
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Email address	enquiries@liskeard.cornwall.sch.uk

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