

Lansdowne School

Argyll Close, Dalyell Road, London SW9 9QL

Inspection dates

1–2 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The experienced executive headteacher is dedicated to improving outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. She is resilient and resourceful.
- All groups of pupils make good progress from low starting points in a range of subjects. They are challenged to achieve nationally recognised qualifications, including GCSEs.
- Pupils make particularly strong progress in reading because there is a whole-school consistent focus on this subject.
- Teachers plan lessons which are adapted to cater for the needs of different groups of pupils. Teachers use consistent communication strategies, visual supports and behaviour management methods, all of which support pupils to achieve well.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics because teachers plan activities that are closely matched to their level of attainment. Pupils have limited opportunities, however, to practise their skills in real contexts and environments.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively because they work closely with teachers. Their work enables pupils to remain on task and make gains in their learning and behaviour.
- Sometimes teachers do not challenge pupils to utilise their literacy skills fully in other subjects.
- Governance is strong. Governors ask informed and pertinent questions which hold leaders to account for their work.
- Safeguarding practices are effective. All staff receive regular training to ensure that they have up-to-date information and guidance.
- Pupils behave extremely well in lessons and around school. They treat adults and each other with respect.
- A wide range of diverse opportunities are provided which support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- Older pupils receive independent advice and guidance, supported by opportunities to visit and experience a range of businesses and industries. This enables them to make informed, realistic decisions about their futures.
- Middle leaders are enthusiastic and committed. They are developing their skills in their new roles.
- Some key documentation lacks a precise focus on exactly what leaders intend to do and what impact they expect to see on pupil outcomes.
- Led by the head of school, the new sixth form provides appropriate courses for older students, all currently in Year 12. These older students are proud of their senior status.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - developing the skills and knowledge of those new to their leadership roles so that they can drive forward improvements within their areas of responsibility
 - ensuring that key documentation is consistent, precise and sharply focused on priorities for school improvement.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that teachers' expectations of pupils' literacy skills are consistently high in all curriculum areas
 - providing opportunities for pupils to practise the mathematical skills they have learned in the classroom in a variety of real situations and environments.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive headteacher has established a culture of high ambition in the school. She is determined that pupils will be well prepared for meaningful employment and to live as independently as possible in adulthood.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of the pupils on roll. Pupils study a range of subjects and achieve recognised accreditation at the end of key stage 4 at either GCSE or entry level. Leaders have introduced appropriate vocational courses for those enrolled in the new sixth form, which they study alongside English and mathematics. Many pupils take up the option of attending after-school clubs and enjoy activities such as computing, cookery, art and sports.
- The school's provision of careers advice and guidance is enhanced by visits to local businesses and community projects such as shops and hotels. Pupils are able to develop challenging yet realistic aspirations as a result. Until recently, however, advice and guidance has been focused on older pupils in Year 11. Careers education and guidance for younger pupils is in development.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported very well through a wealth of interesting and thought-provoking activities. For example, learning about Islam was enriched by a visit to the British Library to see an ancient copy of the Qur'an; pupils debated ethical issues such as badger culling; older pupils supported younger ones through a buddy system; and pupils reflected thoughtfully on what they learned during Black history month.
- Similarly, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain because they learn how democracy works through experiencing an election and following news reports of a national referendum. They also study key aspects of British society such as the royal family, Remembrance Day and British music icons.
- Leaders provide appropriate opportunities for members of staff to develop their skills and knowledge. They support those who wish to attend training courses in order to improve the quality of their teaching or to extend their skill-set by taking on new subject areas or responsibilities.
- Many leaders, including middle leaders, are new to their roles. They are keen and enthusiastic. The executive headteacher and governors are making sure that these new leaders get the support they need so that they can take full responsibility for aspects of the school's work.
- The executive headteacher knows exactly where the strengths and weaknesses of the school's provision lie. She makes accurate judgements about the quality of the school's work. However, in some key documentation minor errors occur. The school's plans for improvement lack a sharp focus on exactly what will be done and when, and what the intended impact is on pupils' outcomes.

Governance of the school

- The arrangements for governance of the school have changed since the last inspection. The school entered into a hard federation with Turney School in January 2016 and the schools share a governing body. Governors have made sure that they pay equal attention to both schools during meetings and have simple but effective strategies in place to ensure this.
- Governors ask challenging questions in meetings to hold leaders to account for their work. They make checks on the school's work, particularly in relation to safeguarding. Governors are aware of the views of pupils and take these into account when, for example, arranging events and celebrations.
- Governors have used resources to support leaders effectively. For example, the appointment of a school business manager has freed up leaders' time so they can take a more strategic view. Governors have also funded additional input from therapists to make sure that all the needs of pupils are met. They check that pupil premium funding is spent wisely to ensure that eligible pupils receive the support they need to make the same progress as others.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have made sure that, despite unexpected changes to the designated safeguarding leaders, all members of staff know who to report any concerns to. The names of the designated safeguarding leads are displayed clearly in each classroom. These people are appropriately trained to fulfil this role.
- Members of staff receive regular safeguarding updates through training events. They have all read part 1 of the current guidance issued by the Secretary of State, 'Keeping children safe in education', 2016.
- Leaders work closely with other agencies such as social care when concerns arise. They keep orderly records of actions taken, meetings held and professionals involved.
- Leaders have made sure that the school environment remains safe and secure, despite the extensive building work that is taking place. Visitors are checked on arrival and all the relevant checks on employees are complete.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. This is because teachers plan well-structured lessons informed by the school's assessment information about individual pupils' attainment in that subject. For example, in a science lesson a wide range of different visual resources were provided to help pupils with differing abilities learn about reflex actions and the function of the spinal cord. They learned challenging and appropriate scientific vocabulary such as 'relay neurones'.
- A high degree of consistency in learning environments, behaviour management and communication systems helps pupils to understand what is expected of them and to focus on their learning.

- Leaders have ensured that the teaching of reading is given a very high priority. Pupils make excellent progress in this subject as a result of frequent reading lessons and an emphasis on reading for pleasure. Leaders assess pupils' reading ages regularly to make sure that they are making swift progress. This work is further enhanced through links with a local high school whose sixth-formers visit Lansdowne each week to read with Year 7 pupils.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved since the last inspection and all groups of pupils make good progress in this subject. This is because teachers make sure that pupils are given work that challenges them and moves them forward in their learning. Pupils have fewer opportunities, however, to practise their skills in real-life situations.
- Teaching assistants are deployed very effectively to enable pupils to access learning, to communicate successfully and to make good progress. They are well briefed by teachers so they know exactly what their role is in each session. As a result, they promote learning very well.
- Occasionally, teachers do not use the assessment information they have about pupils' literacy skills to make sure they are fully challenged in other curriculum subjects. For example, pupils who are able to write several paragraphs may not be asked to write more than a few words when writing in other subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils who met with inspectors were articulate and confident in expressing their views. They are aware of how well they are doing in lessons, and what grades they are aiming for in their GCSE and entry level examinations.
- Bullying is rare, but when it does occur it is appropriately logged and dealt with effectively. Pupils know that they can speak to members of staff if they have any concerns.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in a range of environments. During the inspection, some pupils were learning what information should not be shared online. Others were learning how to use sharp knives safely when cooking, and about the dangers of cross-contamination in the kitchen.
- Pupils are aware of the benefits of exercise and healthy eating. The school's behaviour reward system promotes this well through the issuing of tokens which can be exchanged for healthy snacks in the school tuckshop.
- Pupils who have medical needs are well catered for. Appropriate care plans are in place and implemented consistently. This means that these pupils are able to continue their learning uninterrupted.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils conduct themselves extremely well in lessons and as they move around the school. They are polite and respectful.

- Pupils told inspectors that behaviour has improved because there is more space in the new school building and because adults are more consistent in their approach. Inspectors agree. Incidents of poor behaviour have reduced over time. Individual pupils who demonstrate inappropriate behaviour as a result of their special educational needs respond well to strategies put in place. Consequently, their behaviour improves.
- Pupils are keen to learn. In lessons they pay attention well, and if they sometimes struggle to do so adults skilfully support them to regain their focus. Occasionally, when teaching is less strong, pupils become distracted and find it more difficult to refocus their attention.
- Pupils are encouraged to attend school regularly and overall attendance has improved over time. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced. Leaders make sure that any absence is followed up rigorously and support pupils to return to school as quickly as possible.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress from low starting points in a wide range of subjects, culminating in achievement of recognised qualifications at the end of key stage 4. The most able pupils in the school are challenged to achieve well because they are able to access GCSE courses in a range of subjects including English, art, science and religious education.
- Pupils of all abilities are well prepared for the next stage of their education because they leave the school with recognised accreditation which enables them to access appropriate college courses.
- In 2016 more than seven out of every 10 pupils made at least expected progress in English and mathematics. Leaders have identified a cohort who made a little less than the progress expected and have put strategies in place which are helping these pupils to catch up.
- Pupils make particularly strong progress in reading as a result of the emphasis placed on this subject by leaders. Most pupils' reading ages increase by more than their chronological age over time. Teachers make sure that literacy activities are included in other subjects such as food technology, science and physical education.
- Teachers assess the progress pupils have made in every subject each half term. The accuracy of their assessments is checked by senior leaders and through close working with the other school in the federation.
- Pupils eligible for pupil premium funding make good progress alongside their classmates because teachers plan lessons adapted for the needs of each individual pupil.
- Leaders check the progress of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, and with different categories of need. No group makes significantly different progress to others. Boys make similar progress to girls.
- Leaders have taken effective action to make sure that progress in mathematics matches that in English. Scrutiny of pupils' work demonstrates that work is set at an appropriate level and challenges them to progress more quickly.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Provision for students over the age of 16 opened in September 2016. At the time of the inspection it had been open for six weeks.
- The head of school, who has responsibility for designing an appropriate curriculum and setting up the provision, is enthusiastic and passionate about this area of his work. He has set up a relevant curriculum offer for students. This enables them to continue studying English and mathematics alongside working towards a range of vocational qualifications.
- The key focus of the provision is to prepare students for the workplace. Visits to local employers, practice interviews with business leaders and the availability of vocational courses support this aim. Leaders are planning appropriate work experience placements for students to undertake. These activities form part of the careers advice and guidance available to students.
- Students in Year 12 behave well, and respond well to their status as senior students. They wear their new uniform with pride. Students who spoke to inspectors talked positively about their visits to careers fairs, apprenticeship conferences and other events where they have gained information about possible future pathways when they leave school.
- It is too soon to comment on other aspects of the provision because it has only recently opened.

School details

Unique reference number	100654
Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	10005548

This inspection 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	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	89
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	12
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Osborne
Executive headteacher	Linda Adams
Telephone number	020 7737 3713
Website	http://www.lansdowne.lambeth.sch.uk/
Email address	admin@lansdowne.lambeth.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 June 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- All pupils have a statement of educational needs or an education, health and care plan. The school admits pupils who have autism spectrum disorders or speech and language difficulties. Pupils also have associated learning difficulties.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has entered into a hard federation with Turney School. The schools share a governing body and an executive headteacher. In September 2016 the school opened a sixth form. This provision currently caters for

Year 12 students, and it is planned to extend this to Year 13 in September 2017.

- In September 2016 the school moved into a new building. The old building is currently being demolished to provide outdoor space for the school.
- Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is well above the national average. There are significantly more boys than girls in the school, which is typical for schools of this type.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 16 lessons. Many of these observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also visited several after-school clubs. In addition, inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and attitudes at break and lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with: the chair of governors; a parent governor; senior and middle leaders; groups of staff and pupils. A telephone call was made to a representative of the local authority.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised including that relating to safeguarding, information about pupils' outcomes, behaviour logs and leaders' plans for further improvement.
- There were insufficient responses to the online parent questionnaire, Parent View, for inspectors to consider. However, they took into account the responses to the school's recent questionnaire, which two thirds of parents responded to.

Inspection team

Gaynor Roberts, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Rosemarie McCarthy

Ofsted Inspector

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