

Lady Lumley's School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121671
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	301368
Inspection date	5 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Susan Bowles HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1033
6th form	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Garbutt
Headteacher	Mr R Bramley
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2003
School address	Swainsea Lane Pickering North Yorkshire YO18 8NG
Telephone number	01751 472846
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Age group	11-18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated how well the school's leaders and managers identify and respond to underperformance and raise achievement for all groups. They gathered evidence from meeting staff with relevant responsibilities, pupils, sixth form students and governors, and from observing lessons and reading pupils' work, parents' questionnaires and other documents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no suggestion that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Lady Lumley's School serves the small market town of Pickering and an extensive area of rural North Yorkshire. It is a specialist Sports College. There are more girls than boys. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is half the national average. Nearly all pupils are from a White British heritage. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school in Year 7 is above average. The area served by the school is large and diverse and, whilst the overall socio-economic context is above average, nearly 40% of the post-16 students claim educational maintenance allowances. The school is popular and few pupils leave or start the school between Year 7 and Year 11. The school has been successful in gaining national awards such as Investors in People, Healthy Schools, Artsmark (Silver), Sportsmark as well as the International Schools Award (Intermediate). It is an extended services school, a Specialist Schools and Academies Trust mentor school and the hub school for the Ryedale and Whitby School Sports Partnership. The school is also a member of the Ryedale Area Learning Partnership and an Educational Improvement Partnership.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has some outstanding features including its curriculum and its partnership work with others to improve provision. The school is making good progress in planned improvements because of the efforts of the highly motivated staff and the support of the pupils. For example, management initiatives have secured improvements in standards that are demonstrated most strikingly in outcomes in GCSE examination results.

Pupils enter the school with standards that are slightly better than average. At the end of Key Stage 3 standards are consistently above average in mathematics and science, though they have recently dipped to below average in English. By the end of Key Stage 4 standards have been well above average for a number of years and improved further in 2007. Overall achievement is good, but it is stronger in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3. Achievement in English is good and it is outstanding in mathematics. Although girls achieve higher standards than boys the gap is not as great as it is nationally. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as other pupils. The school correctly judged achievement to be good, but recognises that it could be even higher.

The school's leadership has tackled underachievement in subjects and is improving teaching and assessment to raise standards further. Tracking has identified underachieving individuals and groups accurately and staff respond supportively and effectively. In these ways, the school has moved forward well since its last inspection and much has been accomplished through adroit leadership and management. It offers good value for money and has excellent capacity to become even better.

An important factor in raising achievement has been the curriculum. This has been transformed through bold and imaginative thinking - positively influenced by the sports specialism - and excellent partnerships with co-providers. It caters very well for students' expressed interests and reflects local needs, for example, through courses in animal care, construction and countryside management. While traditional courses remain strong, the school offers a broad and expanding range of vocational qualifications at all levels. Participation and success in both modern foreign language and information and communication technology (ICT) courses are growing strongly and from 2008 options will include the new Creative and Media diploma. Enrichment opportunities are rewarding for all ages and aptitudes, as high participation levels and students' enthusiastic responses make clear. Case studies show how the sports specialism has provided responsibilities and opportunities which have reduced the risk of disaffection among pupils. Subject faculties share and build on bright ideas: for example, in the wake of the development of community sports leaders, other subjects are introducing accredited community language leadership awards. Pupils' future economic well-being is further strongly supported by high quality experience of work and enterprise and well received sessions on managing personal finances.

The school's self-evaluation accurately identified that teaching is good and that a significant proportion is outstanding. Good teaching and pupils' positive attitudes to work help to explain why most pupils reach or exceed the standards expected of them and see school as an enjoyable place to be. Parents have noted how pupils achieve well from the start and this gives them great confidence in the staff and the leadership. One parent remarked on how children, 'are encouraged to think about their own learning'. This testifies to the success of one of the school's current strategies, which is to make sure pupils learn how to learn for themselves. Inspectors

agree that this initiative is being embedded in classrooms with good effect. Pupils and students listen well to their teachers and are interested learners. In the best lessons seen, they faced challenges well matched to their levels of understanding. Clear targets, teachers' questions and the tasks set help pupils think for themselves and they were learning to appraise their own work. The school recognises that more teaching needs to promote outstanding progress in such ways and its monitoring focuses on this. Teachers mark work conscientiously, although their comments do not consistently give pupils clear information about what they have achieved and what they need to do next. Guidance to help pupils improve their work is satisfactory at present.

The school's climate of collaboration fosters really good relationships and good behaviour and ensures that pupils develop high levels of confidence. Parents overwhelmingly trust the school: they feel that their younger children flourish thanks to their comprehensive introduction to the school and the all round good quality of their care and education. The individual support given to pupils' personal well-being is remarkable, explaining why one parent of a sixth former described the school's help as, 'truly inspirational'. Behaviour is calm and considerate. Pupils feel safe and are alert to the needs of others. They are pleased that hazards such as smoking and bullying are not tolerated in the school. They mature into tolerant and sensible individuals who work very well together and want to learn. They take on responsibilities such as being council members, sports leaders or buddies with maturity and know the contribution they make to the school and wider community is valued. Care and support for individuals are particularly strong throughout the school and help explain why vulnerable make similarly good progress as their peers. Any pupil who falters is supported by consistently good teaching and high quality support. Close working relationships between teachers, support staff and external specialists make a strong contribution to pupils' health and well-being.

Inspectors differ from the school in evaluating leadership and management as good, rather than outstanding. It has very strong features. The school's vision is to inspire a love of learning and so to maximise life chances. The many changes which the school's leadership has introduced since the last inspection have brought the vision closer. Recent improvements in accommodation, the curriculum and resources for ICT have had a very positive impact in key areas. The development plan has clear and appropriate objectives. The school, including its governors, knows its strengths and weaknesses very well and uses performance data effectively. The school's self-evaluation was accurate in identifying relative weaknesses in the sixth form. A distinctive feature of its self-evaluation is the wide involvement of staff and the resulting strong sense of shared responsibility for improvement. Through the Learning Forums, students, too, contribute. The very recent handover to a new headteacher has led to no loss of momentum. The school's procedures for safeguarding pupils comply with current requirements. Challenging and well-grounded targets are being used to stretch performance in some areas, though not all have been met, including some linked to the sports specialism. An outstanding capacity to improve is indicated by the strong track record in identifying and tackling underachievement, demonstrated in the dramatically improving trends for 16-year-olds and the swift and effective action to improve English. However, more remains to be done to raise achievement, particularly in English at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

In the sixth form, provision is good, but does not yet have the strong impact on outcomes found in Key Stage 4. The numbers of students staying on into the sixth form have increased,

and the range of their prior attainment has broadened. In A level and VCE (Vocational Certificate of Education) examinations, students scored points per entry above the local and national average in the past two years, though unvalidated results for 2007 indicate a decline. Examination results show a broadly average standard over time. The school's data indicates that in most subjects, students make better progress than expected based on their GCSE results. The curriculum has been broadened and academic support and guidance have been strengthened. Successful links with other providers work to mutual advantage in extending the range of subjects on offer. Students' progress, attendance and effort are suitably monitored and students appreciate the way the school looks after them. There are well developed plans to broaden further the suite of Level 1, 2 and 3 courses by 2008. Teaching is good and the capacity of the leadership and management of the sixth form has, appropriately, been strengthened to improve quality assurance, including better use of data to promote good achievement. The school judged the effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form to be good and inspectors agree.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards further at Key Stage 3, particularly in English, and also in the sixth form.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2	2
The attendance of learners	2	2
The behaviour of learners	2	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I am writing to inform you of the findings of the school's recent short inspection. Mr Jones and I greatly enjoyed meeting you and much appreciated your thoughtful contributions. We were grateful to your parents for their responses to the questionnaire, too.

We agreed with you that Lady Lumley's is a good school with some outstanding features. You make very good progress in Key Stage 4 and your GCSE examination results are better than the national average. Reasons for this in our view include the excellent range of courses you can now choose from, the good teaching and your cooperation and effort. The school's sports specialism makes a good contribution to the quality of your education and you have shown great enthusiasm for the opportunities it has brought. The school also looks after you well, helping you towards a healthy and satisfying future and stepping in when you need extra support. The school is well led.

Though good, your progress is not yet good enough to reach really challenging targets. This is true of English in Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form. We saw how well you responded to some strong teaching and would like to see even more of this.

The school has been asked to:

- raise standards further at Key Stage 3, particularly in English, and also in the sixth form
- increase the proportion of outstanding teaching.

Each of these targets will only be achieved if you play your part. Your positive attitudes led us to think you would rise to the challenge and we would like to wish you well for the future.