

Laurence Jackson School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111724
Local authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	378344
Inspection dates	29 February 2012–1 March 2012
Lead inspector	Mick Hill

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,266
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gwynne Smith
Headteacher	Tony Gavin
Date of previous school inspection	4 December 2008
School address	Church Lane Guisborough TS14 6RD
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Age group	11–16
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Introduction

Inspection team

Mick Hill	Ofsted Seconded Additional inspector
Peter Bannon	Additional inspector
David Bridgewater	Additional inspector
Margaret Farrow	Her Majesty's Inspector
Heather Scott	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team observed 45 lessons across a range of subject areas and both key stages. In addition, short visits to nine lessons and to registration sessions and an assembly were conducted to sample students' behaviour and attitudes to learning. Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, teachers, groups of students and representatives of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and scrutinised a full range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation document, assessment information, records of lesson observations and information related to students' behaviour and their safety in school. The 345 questionnaires from parents and carers and all those returned by students and teachers were analysed.

Information about the school

Laurence Jackson is a larger-than-average comprehensive school. It serves the market town of Guisborough and the surrounding area. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below average. There are very few students from minority-ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students who are disabled and those with special educational needs is above that found nationally as is the proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs. There is resourced provision, the Applegarth Unit, for 12 students with an autistic spectrum disorder who travel to the school from across the local authority area. The school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in the 2010/11 academic year. It has been a specialist sports college since 2002 and has a number of awards, including Artsmark Gold, Healthy Schools and the Investors in People award.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school because school leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are driving improvement successfully, especially in the quality of teaching. It is not outstanding because of the minority of lessons remaining in which teaching is no better than satisfactory.
- There is a rising trend in GCSE examination results and these are regularly above those found nationally. Last year's underachievement in English has been tackled well.
- The very clear focus by school leaders on improving the quality of teaching through professional development and managing the performance of teachers has resulted in a high proportion of good or better lessons.
- Students are keen to learn and relationships between students and staff are very positive. Consequently, students' behaviour is good and attendance is high. Students report that they feel safe and that there is little bullying and what there is tends to be name calling. When this happens and is reported it is dealt with robustly and does not usually recur.
- The leadership provided by senior and middle leaders has resulted in improvements in teaching and in students' progress across the school. This gives substance to the school's ambition of 'improving the life chances' of all its students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the small proportion of teaching that is not at least good by:
 - ensuring that all teachers make best use of the school's detailed assessment information when planning lessons in order to provide differentiated tasks that meet the learning needs of all students
 - building on the good relationships which exist between students and teachers and the students' willingness to learn by providing more opportunities for students to study independently and take responsibility for their own learning
 - sharing more widely the outstanding practice that exists in the school.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Inspection questionnaire responses indicate that parents and carers consider their children make good progress in lessons and inspection evidence shows that this is currently the case. Leaders are aware that there continues to be some variation in the progress made by pupils in subjects such as aspects of science and design and technology; they are taking action to iron out these anomalies through well focused professional development opportunities and robust performance management arrangements when necessary.

For two years prior to 2011 there had been good improvement in the proportion of Year 11 students attaining five GCSEs grade A* to C including English and mathematics; results were significantly above that found nationally. The proportion dipped in 2011, due to disappointing results in English, which were slightly below average. Consequently, for the first time in three years, students did not make the progress expected of them in this subject given their average attainment on entry into Year 7. Nonetheless, the school exceeded the government's floor standards for academic performance. Results in mathematics remained well above average. Students made good progress in this subject and continue to do so. The school has taken decisive action to recover from the temporary setback in English. Inspection evidence from lesson observations, book scrutiny and the school's tracking data shows that the current Year 11 students are making good progress and are on track to achieve well against their challenging 2012 targets.

The previous underachievement in English of boys, middle-ability students and those entitled to free school meals is being tackled well through careful tracking of their progress and a range of actions and support to ensure that any student at risk of underachieving is able to catch up with their peers. Consequently, they too are making good progress towards their targets in lessons and the gap between their achievement and that of their peers is narrowing effectively. Students with a disability or who have special educational needs make good progress in their learning. Students in the Applegarth Unit are particularly well supported within the unit and when accessing classes in the main school. As a result, they achieve well from their individual starting points.

Quality of teaching

Parents, carers and students report high levels of satisfaction with the quality of teaching and the ways in which the school promotes the development of students' communication, reading, writing and mathematics skills. Inspection evidence confirms these views are accurate. The quality of the large majority of teaching is good or better and is having a positive impact on students' achievements in lessons and over time.

Students are keen to learn and arrive promptly to lessons. Most have positive relationships with adults and each other. Students listen carefully, take pride in their work, and help each other. Teachers have secure knowledge of their subjects and this supports the planned curriculum effectively. In lessons where teaching is good or outstanding, homework is set which extends students' learning beyond the classroom, marking guides students about the next steps they need to take to make progress and careful thought is given to making the most of opportunities to enhance students' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development. The best lessons are well planned to include all learners, including those who are disabled

and those with special educational needs, and use any support assistants to good effect. Well thought out activities hook students' interests and make learning fun. In a Year 7 physical education lesson, where teaching was outstanding, for example, students worked enthusiastically in small teams on a variety of warm up exercises while the teacher circulated asking challenging questions of the teams and individuals and awarding team points. The students were then questioned about their current level of attainment and given a choice of orienteering courses expertly matched to their individual abilities and needs

In the few lessons observed which were less than good inspectors noted too much teacher talk, too great an emphasis on silent working and all students doing the same work whatever their ability. Although there is a consistent approach to lesson planning throughout the school, teachers are not always using the school's assessment and tracking information well enough to plan activities that are matched closely to students' individual learning needs and then challenging them to move on in their learning rapidly.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

A small minority of parents, carers and students responding to the questionnaires expressed concerns about behaviour in lessons. Discussions with students and lesson observations found that students' behaviour occasionally becomes restless when they are not engaged or challenged in lessons as well as they might be. However, in the majority of lessons inspectors observed, students were very well behaved and displayed a willingness to take responsibility for their own learning. This is reflected in their high levels of attendance and punctuality. It is also markedly clear in the way in which students with an autistic spectrum disorder are successfully integrated into lessons and other activities.

The good curriculum ensures students are well aware of risks in and outside of school and know how to manage their own safety, for example, when using the internet. A very large majority of students who responded to the questionnaire and who spoke with inspectors report that there is little bullying, usually name calling, and when it happens and is reported it is dealt with robustly.

Leadership and management

School leaders and the governing body are strongly committed to improving the school. The expansion of the leadership team and the continued development of middle leaders have played a crucial role in securing the continuous improvement seen since the previous inspection. The school's good capacity to improve is effectively supported by leaders' unequivocal understanding of where further improvement is required and measures are in place to address remaining weaknesses successfully. For example, relative weaknesses in English, science and technology are being tackled well and students' achievement in these subjects is improving. This is because teaching is more often good or better and the school is progressing towards its ambition that teaching is always at least good. Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire and to the Parent View online questionnaire appreciate the efforts made by the school. The vast majority would recommend it to another parent.

The curriculum is good because there is a clear emphasis on meeting the needs and aspirations of students. This is seen in the strong vocational component in Key Stage 4. The sports specialism has a particularly positive impact on students' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example, through the 'Olympic Values' programme. The good development of such personal qualities, the good progress that pupils are making in lessons,

the skills, knowledge and understanding they acquire, and their academic achievements ensure that students are well prepared for their next steps and provided with equal opportunities to do well. Consequently, most students move on successfully to employment, education or training.

An accurate knowledge of the quality of individual teachers' performance ensures that training and support for teachers is focused well and results in improvement. Staff morale is high because they can see the impact their good teaching is having on students' achievement. They are keen to develop their skills further and share their expertise. Members of the governing body give generously of their time and are wholeheartedly committed to the life of the school and the students and carry out their duties effectively; for example, they have ensured that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and give no cause for concern.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



2 March 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Laurence Jackson School, Guisborough, TS14 6RD

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave when we came to inspect your school. We very much enjoyed talking to you in lessons, meetings and social times. We took full account of your views and those of your parents and carers who had completed questionnaires when we made our judgements.

We have judged your school to be providing you with a good education. The quality of teaching is good overall and, as a result, almost all of you make good progress in your lessons. Leaders in the school have successfully tackled the temporary underachievement in English that was seen in examinations results for Year 11 in summer 2011. We were impressed by your generally good behaviour and attitudes to learning in lessons. This is demonstrated by your good and improving attendance rates and punctuality to lessons. You told us that you feel safe in school and bullying is rare, but if it does happen it is dealt with well by staff.

We know, and senior leaders agree, that the quality of some lessons can improve further by ensuring you are asked the sorts of questions that really extend your thinking and build in more opportunities for you to be independent learners who have a bigger responsibility for your own learning. We have asked the governing body and staff to make sure that this happens in all lessons. We have also asked them to make sure that all teachers take account of what you already know and can do, so that lessons are planned to match your individual learning needs more closely and provide the right level of challenge for each of you.

We have every confidence that you will continue to do well and will find ways to contribute to school developments and help the staff make the school even better. Best wishes on behalf of the inspection team. We wish you all very happy and successful futures.

Yours sincerely

Mick Hill
Lead inspector

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