

# Lord Grey School

Rickleby Lane, Milton Keynes, MK3 6EW

**Inspection dates** 2–3 July 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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's overall effectiveness is now good. School leaders know the school's strengths and those areas that still need working on. Governors are effective. Both have high expectations of teachers and students.
- Teaching has improved since the last inspection. It is now typically good. This is having a positive impact on the attainment and progress of most students, which are now good throughout the school.
- The proportion of students making expected and good progress is increasing. It is similar to national expectations in science, English and mathematics.
- Teachers are good at helping to improve the reading and writing skills of students. This is leading to more success in subjects.
- Students are respectful to each other and their teachers. The behaviour of students is good and attitudes to learning are positive. Students are proud of the school.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Students feel very well cared for and say the school does everything it can to keep them safe. Parents support this view.
- The school provides a rich and varied range of additional activities. Students develop good social skills and a good understanding of social, moral, spiritual and cultural issues.
- Attendance has risen this year and is now above the national average. Punctuality to school and to lessons is good.
- The sixth form is good. It is well led and good teaching is leading to better results for many students.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Work is not always planned to support or challenge students, especially the most able students.
- Checks by leaders to measure the impact of actions are not always precise enough to bring about more improvement in all subjects.
- Guidance to help students improve is not consistently good. Not all teachers check that students understand and act on advice given.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 29 lessons, five of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. In addition, they made a number of shorter visits to lessons, tutorial sessions and assemblies.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other leaders and managers, and groups of staff.
- Members of the inspection team held meetings with six groups of students, representing all age groups in the school. Discussions also took place with students informally.
- A meeting was held with the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors. An inspector also met with representatives of the local authority.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and scrutinised documents, including the school's own evaluation of how well it is doing, the school improvement plan and statistical information about students' achievement, attendance and exclusions.
- The inspectors took account of the 13 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 102 responses to the staff questionnaires. Additional comments were received from parents, and consideration was given to the views expressed by students and their families in response to the school's own surveys.

## Inspection team

Rob Ridout, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Huw Bishop	Additional Inspector
Helen Bailey	Additional Inspector
Carol Hannaford	Additional Inspector
Teresa Gilpin	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Lord Grey School is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- There is a sixth form partnership with Sir Herbert Leon Academy which forms the Milton Keynes South Sixth Form. This is not continuing in the new academic year.
- There is a high proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the school receives additional funding known as the pupil premium.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is in line with the national average.
- The proportion supported through school action plus, or who have a statement of special education needs is average. Many of these students have moderate learning difficulties, behavioural, social and emotional difficulties or other specific needs.
- Almost one fifth of Year 7 students benefit from the funded catch-up programme.
- Early entry for GCSE examinations is not used by the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards. These set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to outstanding levels by sharing the best practice that exists in the school and ensuring that all:
  - teachers make good use of information about the progress made by students to plan the next stages in their learning
  - students, including the most able, are challenged more in their learning so that they make rapid progress
  - marking is consistently good across the school and teaching ensures that students understand and act on the advice given through consistent marking of their work
  - leaders check and act to ensure that teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility are of the highest quality and inspire students to do even better.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students enter the school in Year 7 with skills in literacy and numeracy that are generally well below average. As a result of an improved curriculum, better teaching and good attitudes to learning, they are leaving with standards that are broadly in line with the national average.
- Over the last two years, the proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE passes at A\* to C, including English and mathematics, has risen. The school's own checks on students' progress show that students are on a path to maintain this rate of improvement in 2014.
- Students are more confident in their English and mathematics work. As a result, most make progress in both subjects similar to other students nationally. Students achieve exceptionally well in mathematics.
- Current students make good progress across many other subjects, including humanities and arts subjects, science and Spanish. Boys and girls make similar progress. Students make good progress in BTEC work-related courses.
- School leaders have set high expectations of what students can achieve. Further improvements in teaching and good systems providing additional support for those falling behind have led to these students being more confident and achieving more success in their work.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress in their learning because teaching is closely matched to their needs. They receive extra help from learning support assistants in lessons and additional mentoring support.
- In 2013, students eligible for additional funding achieved almost one grade below their peers in both English and mathematics. These students also made less progress in these subjects than their peers. Current checks on their progress show that the support provided through one-to-one tuition, in class support and the employment of additional teachers is reducing the attainment gap. The differences have reduced to about half a grade.
- Literacy is promoted well across the school. Reading is encouraged throughout and literacy skills are developed in many subjects. Year 7 catch-up funding is used effectively to support weak readers and help them to improve their reading skills so that they are able to keep up with their classmates in lessons.
- Students' achievement in the sixth form is good. It has improved since the last inspection. The majority of students complete their courses and gain good grades at the end of their studies. Over time, it is clear that students make rapid gains in their learning and are successful in both academic and work-related examinations.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection. It is now typically good. This has resulted in improvements in the attainment of Year 11 students in 2013, reflected in the good progress made by students across groups and in most subjects.
- Teachers' specialist subject knowledge is used to good effect in many subjects. Teachers plan a variety of activities that students feel they can relate to well. Students find lessons interesting and enjoyable and so engage positively in their learning.
- Good relationships between teachers and students are evident across the school. Staff genuinely care about the students, who recognise and appreciate this level of care. Students enjoy their learning and show positive attitudes towards their learning, although a few do not always take care over the presentation in their books.
- The teaching of mathematics is particularly strong and students make particularly good progress in the subject. Greater consistency in the teaching of basic arithmetic, particularly at Key Stage 3, has led to many students having very solid foundations on which they can build their learning.
- The teaching of science has improved over the last year and students now make typically good progress in all years. There is a strong emphasis on planning work and building on the strengths

of students and developing knowledge in those aspects they do not understand. Students carry out practical work safely and carefully.

- All students, including those entitled to additional funding, benefit from the development of literacy skills in a wide range of lessons, from art to physical education, and across year groups. Support staff and learning mentors work closely with teachers to plan work for these students so that behavioural and learning difficulties are not a barrier to learning.
- Many teachers develop students' thinking effectively, promote deep discussion about topics and check students' understanding. In a Year 12 mathematics lesson, students were asked to think carefully about what they were learning. Students said that 'this helped them to identify what they could do better'.
- Some examples of the excellent impact of assessment are evident in students' work. In a Year 8 English class, students made thoughtful and helpful responses to the written comments of the teacher so that they made good progress.
- The quality of marking is not consistently good throughout the school. Not all teachers give clear enough advice to students about how to improve their work, and not all encourage their students to follow up or respond to their comments.
- Homework is set and is usually appropriate, but occasionally it is not as helpful as it could be in promoting students' learning. Students say they would like it to be more fun and relevant to their daily lives.
- Teaching in the sixth form has improved since the last inspection and is now consistently good. It is underpinned by good subject knowledge and interesting, challenging approaches, which engage and motivate students, producing improved results across many subjects.

### **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. This is a calm and orderly school, with high expectations of its students. They are polite, well-mannered and courteous towards each other and the adults that work with them.
- In a survey of parents conducted by the school, the majority of parents felt that behaviour is good and believed their children enjoyed their learning. Responses to Parent View were similarly positive. The vast majority of staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire agreed that behaviour was good.
- Students arrive promptly to school and lessons, come with the correct equipment and are well prepared to learn. Attitudes to learning are good and work in books is neat and well presented.
- Where work is less challenging, students become disinterested in their work and lose focus. There is some unfinished work and graffiti in some of the books. These are the reasons why behaviour is not outstanding.
- Outside of lessons, students' behaviour is a credit to themselves, to their school and to their parents. Students are polite, well-mannered and ready to help others in need.
- There is a clear system of sanctions, and on the rare occasions of disruption in the classroom the incidents are dealt with firmly and fairly. Students say that 'there are rewards for good conduct' and that they 'like the points for prizes and the chance to celebrate their and other students' success in assemblies'.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Students appreciate the high level of care. Students are aware of the risks they may face, both online and outside the school, and they know how to take appropriate action to keep safe on the internet.
- Students, including disabled students and students who have special educational needs, say they feel safe anywhere on the school site and are free from intimidation or prejudice. They know what to do and who to see in the event of any bullying taking place. Both students and parents say, and the school records show, that the school deals with any incidents swiftly and effectively.
- There has been a marked improvement in attendance and a drop in the number of persistent

absentees this year because of the school's work with families and individual students.

## **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher is ambitious for the school's development and has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. She makes sure that the care of students is of the highest quality. For example, the school applies safeguarding arrangements very conscientiously to ensure students' safety.
- Senior leaders support the headteacher well and are determined to move the school towards becoming outstanding. Subject leaders work hard to make improvements, but checks to measure the impact of actions are not always precise enough to bring about rapid improvement in all subjects.
- Teachers are set challenging targets and are supported to achieve them through appropriate training and development. The headteacher and members of the leadership team carry out systematic lesson observations. Records show that good teaching is typical. Pay progression links to the setting of targets to improve the quality of teachers' work and students' progress.
- The school leadership has acted quickly to improve the leadership in science following a drop in the 2013 GCSE pass rate. School records show that this has immediately raised standards.
- The school has had a priority to improve systems for checking students' progress over the past two years and this is a continuing area for improvement. Students have regular marking and helpful guidance in English, mathematics and science, but these practices are not consistent across all subjects.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good. Numbers in the sixth form are growing because of the range of courses available to students. Improved systems to check on students' progress have been introduced. This has led to improved outcomes in Year 12 across many subjects and continued good results at A level and in work-related options.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, meets the needs of the students and promotes good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. There are many activities offered beyond the school day. The school is planning carefully for the changes arising from national policy.
- The school's commitment to ensure equality of opportunity is shown by its highly inclusive ethos. There are no groups who do not perform well. The gap between students entitled to support through additional funding and other students in school has narrowed by half.
- Teachers and parents think that school leaders provide effective leadership and management. In recent years, the local authority has, rightly, recognised that the school has needed little support to improve because it has an accurate view of its own performance and is doing well.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has helped steer, support and challenge the school to improve its effectiveness. Governors are supportive of the school, committed to ensuring students enjoy success and securing further improvements. They have a realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and robustly challenge school leaders on students' performance.
  - Governors know what is happening in the school. Their good knowledge of data tells them how the school compares to others. Their own visits and regular interviews with school leaders, teachers and students give them a wider insight. Therefore, governors have a good awareness of the improvements secured since the last inspection, especially in raising the quality of teaching and students' performance.
  - The governing body checks on how the school recognises the work of teachers, rewarding the best, supporting practitioners to develop better skills, and tackling underperformance. They ensure that performance management and pay progression link to students' achievement.
  - Governors regularly visit the school's policies to check that they are implemented and that finances are effectively managed. They know how the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding is spent and ask questions to ensure that it is used effectively to raise standards.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110531
<b>Local authority</b>	Milton Keynes
<b>Inspection number</b>	442447

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,440
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	240
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alicja Tomey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dr Tracey Jones
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16–17 October 2012
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<b>Email address</b>	webpost@lordgrey.org.uk

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