

Inspection of Lancaster Royal Grammar School

East Road, Lancaster, Lancashire LA1 3EF

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 October 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected Lancaster Royal Grammar School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Lancaster Royal Grammar School to be outstanding, before it opened as an academy. From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened in Lancaster Royal Grammar School's effectiveness before and after it converted to academy status.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including students in the sixth form, flourish at Lancaster Royal Grammar School. Without exception, pupils said that they enjoy school. They feel safe and happy.

Pupils are proud to be a member of this distinctive school community. They embrace and value different faiths and cultures. Pupils respect the rights and opinions of others. They develop into articulate, confident and independent young adults.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. They understand that teachers have extremely high expectations of pupils' behaviour. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere around the school site. In lessons, pupils are attentive and respectful. Pupils wear their uniforms, and students in the sixth form wear their business dress, with pride.

Pupils said that bullying is extremely rare. They are confident that there are numerous adults 'to turn to' should an incident of bullying occur. They said it would be dealt with quickly.

Pupils enjoy a first-class range of enrichment activities. Rich opportunities cultivate pupils' leadership skills and contribute to their character development.

There is a broad range of curriculum subjects on offer, including in the sixth form. Teachers have high aspirations for what pupils can achieve. Pupils said they enjoy their learning. All pupils achieve well. Sixth-form students achieve exceptionally well.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders, including governors, are ambitious for all pupils at the school. They value and foster pupils' talents and abilities. Leaders ensure that all pupils leave the school as well-rounded individuals. In recognition of this, a vast number of pupils willingly give up their time to help others. There is a strong, purposeful learning community at Lancaster Royal Grammar School, where pupils and staff support each other equally well.

Pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Leaders have thought about the overarching topics that they want pupils to learn, and the order in which they should learn those topics. Across the school, pupils benefit from teachers' expert subject knowledge. Teachers typically deliver the curriculum skilfully. This enables all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to learn well.

Even though pupils learn well, there are times when teachers are less clear about the essential knowledge that sits below the overarching topics. They are occasionally unclear about the exact knowledge that pupils must learn. This can lead to some variation in how well the curriculum is implemented. Leaders do not always check on how well the curriculum is delivered as carefully as they should.

In the sixth form, the range of courses is also ambitious. Leaders tailor the curriculum to meet students' needs exceptionally well. High levels of subject expertise from staff allow students to gain a deep knowledge and understanding of the subjects that they study. As a result, students' progress through their subject curriculums extremely well. They develop a deep body of subject expertise.

Overall, teachers use assessment strategies effectively to check on how well pupils are learning the curriculum. Nevertheless, there are times where some teachers have not aligned these assessments carefully enough to the knowledge identified in the curriculum. This means that some teachers, on occasions, do not identify pupils' misconceptions quickly enough.

When pupils join Lancaster Royal Grammar School, their reading skills are already well honed. Across the school, leaders provide opportunities for pupils to engage with a wide range of texts. Leaders promote a love of reading, deepening pupils' body of cultural knowledge.

The staff responsible for pupils with SEND are extremely well informed about their needs. Leaders identify pupils' needs quickly and efficiently. They are well versed in supporting teachers so that pupils with SEND can access the content of subject curriculums. Pupils who require additional support, including those pupils with SEND, are assigned an older pupil as a mentor. Mentors successfully help pupils with SEND to build on what they have learned in lessons.

Pupils' attendance is exceptionally high. They are punctual to their lessons. Pupils are considerate, well-behaved, polite and respectful. They build strong relationships with staff.

Pupils benefit from an extremely well-planned 'values' programme. Pupils enjoy the opportunities that they are given to engage with representatives from various worlds of work. Through their engagement in charitable work, leadership activities, the 'Seward Council' and experiences such as the Cadets, pupils make a positive difference to their local and national community.

Students in the sixth form benefit from a carefully planned programme of work experience. Students soak up the guidance that they receive regarding the next steps of their employment, education or training. They are incredibly appreciative of the enormous range of additional enrichment activities and opportunities on offer to them.

Governors are knowledgeable. They support staff and provide robust levels of challenge to leaders. The overwhelming majority of staff are positive about the steps that leaders take to care for their workload and well-being. As a result, they enjoy working at the school and are committed to developing further the learning experiences of pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are proactive. They are aware of the risks that pupils and students face in their local communities. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained to recognise any potential signs of harm. Staff understand how and when to act on safeguarding issues. Pupils know that there are adults in school that they can talk to about any concerns they have. The school's personal development programme is carefully constructed so that pupils are taught about issues such as healthy relationships and how to keep themselves safe online.

Leaders have strong relationships with external partner agencies. When required, leaders act in a timely manner to put in place the necessary early help and support for pupils and students.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasions, the assessments that leaders design do not always link precisely enough to the core knowledge that teachers want pupils to know and remember. Consequently, teachers do not always have a full enough understanding of how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum. Leaders must ensure that their assessment activities routinely help teachers to pinpoint the exact misconceptions and deficits in knowledge that pupils may have.
- Currently, some of the monitoring processes linked to the curriculum do not provide leaders with enough information about how well aspects of the curriculum are planned and delivered to pupils. Consequently, there are times when some pupils do not learn elements of subject knowledge as deeply as they should. As necessary, leaders should fine-tune their systems for checking the quality of education that pupils receive. This is so that they gain a clearer insight into any small adjustments that they need to make to curriculum plans.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	136742
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10199347
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1261
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	395
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Howard Roberts
Headteacher	Christopher Pyle
Website	www.lrgs.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- In recent years, the school has experienced an increase in the number of pupils and students on roll.
- Since September 2019, the school has expanded its sixth-form provision and now admits both boys and girls into the sixth form.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provider.
- The school has boarding provision for approximately 170 pupils and students.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 11 receive information about the full range of education and training options open to them. This includes opportunities for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, middle leaders, teachers and members of support staff.
- An inspector met with the representatives of the governing body. Inspectors also scrutinised the minutes of the governing body meetings.
- Inspectors also spoke with the school improvement partner and an independent careers adviser.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, music, religious education and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited some lessons, spoke with pupils and teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also considered other curriculum areas, including art and design, history and physical education.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding leader and other staff responsible for safeguarding. They considered a range of documentation in relation to safeguarding, including leaders' pre-employment checks on staff and their training records. Inspectors spoke to staff and pupils about wider aspects of safeguarding. They also considered survey responses from staff, parents and carers and pupils around safeguarding.
- Inspectors examined other documents, including the whole-school priorities and the school's self-evaluation summary.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes, in corridors, during registration and in lessons. They also spoke to pupils about bullying, behaviour and leaders' expectations of their behaviour. Inspectors also discussed pupils' programme of wider personal development.
- Inspectors reviewed the 217 responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. This included the 159 comments submitted via the free-text facility. Inspectors also considered views represented in a telephone call from a parent.
- Inspectors also considered the 276 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire and the responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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