

The South Leeds Academy

Old Run Road, Leeds, LS10 2JU

Inspection dates 26–27 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Too few students make the progress they should in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11. Gaps between the achievement of different groups of students are not decreasing quickly enough. Overall, achievement is inadequate.
- Students' literacy skills are not developed well in all lessons.
- Strategies are in place to improve attendance but it is still low and the proportion of students who are persistently absent is higher than the national average.
- Not enough lessons enable the students to make good progress. Staff's expectations of what students can achieve are too low. Work does not engage the students and often all students complete the same work irrespective of their ability.
- Teachers' marking does not always inform the students what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Students are rarely given the opportunity to act on the feedback they receive.
- Faculty leaders do not monitor rigorously the quality of teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- Students in the sixth form make better progress than students in Years 7 to 11 with some students making good progress. The collaboration with a local school has extended the curriculum provided. Overall the sixth form requires improvement.
- The refined and robust data tracking system, used across the whole academy, is making a positive contribution to improving the progress students make.
- The Principal and associate principal have a clear strategic view of what needs to improve. Governors have challenged the senior leaders to improve the quality of education. As a result, the quality of teaching and the progress students make are beginning to improve.
- The alternative provision gives students effective opportunities to re-engage with education.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 41 lessons. Twenty one of these lesson observations were completed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Lessons were observed in Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. A range of subjects was observed.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, the associate principal, members of the senior leadership team, faculty leaders, governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, teaching assistants and teachers with no leadership responsibilities. A meeting was also held with representatives of the academy chain. The inspectors met with groups of students and also spoke with them at informal social times.
- Inspectors scrutinised students' work, read documents presented to them, including those relating to governance, students' progress, self-evaluation, improvement planning, the curriculum and safeguarding.
- Three responses were made to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire (Parent View). This was too low a response for the inspectors to take into account. However the inspectors did take into account a review of parental views completed by the academy prior to the inspection. The 29 responses to the staff questionnaire were considered by the inspection team.
- The inspectors also visited one aspect of the alternative provision to evaluate the education provided.

Inspection team

Tanya Harber Stuart, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Peter William Harrison	Additional Inspector
Pamela Hemphill	Additional Inspector
Christine Kennedy	Additional Inspector
Janet Peckett	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this academy

- The South Leeds Academy is larger than the average secondary school and educates students aged 11 to 19. The sixth form is run in collaboration with another local secondary school. The number of students in the sixth form is increasing. The academy is a member of the School Partnership Trust Academies group.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium (extra funding provided by the government for students who are entitled to free school meals, looked after by the local authority or are children of service families) is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement is well above the national average. The proportion of students supported at school action is above the national average.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is double the national average.
- The academy provides an alternative curriculum for a small number of students in collaboration with a number of other providers including the Hunslet Club, KS4 Engage, Footsteps and SouthWay.
- In 2012 the academy did not meet the government's current floor standard which sets out the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- At the last inspection The South Leeds Academy was given a notice to improve. At the subsequent monitoring visit in December 2012 it was judged to be making satisfactory progress.

What does the academy need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good to ensure attainment at the end of Year 11 continues to rise and all students make at least good progress, by leaders making sure that:
 - staff's expectations of what the students can achieve and the progress they can make are raised
 - all lessons provide all students, regardless of their academic ability, with engaging work which is appropriately challenging and meets their needs and interests, and all do not do the same work
 - teachers ensure students respond to, and implement their feedback and the next steps for learning, and all teachers check how this has moved learning forward as a result
 - all staff use the agreed strategies to develop students' literacy skills in their lessons
 - lesson activities focus on what the students need to learn, not on completing tasks
 - homework is regular and extends students' learning beyond the classroom.
- Sharply focus leadership and management on improving teaching and the progress the students make by:
 - ensuring there is an effective, and rigorous, monitoring of teaching at faculty level to secure

consistently good practice.

- Continue to work with parents and carers to improve attendance.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- The proportion of students achieving five GCSE passes at grades A*-C including mathematics and English has risen over the past three years. However, this proportion is still below the national average. The progress students make especially in the core subjects of English and mathematics, is improving, but far too few students by the end of Year 11 make the progress they should. Overall, given their starting points, students make inadequate progress.
- The progress made by students supported by the pupil premium varies from year to year. In 2012 these students made more progress than their peers. The gaps between the progress made by these students and their peers are decreasing.
- Students supported at school action, school action plus, those who have statements and students who speak English as an additional language make less progress than their peers nationally.
- In 2012, the Year 6 into Year 7 summer school was attended by 108 students. These students have settled into the academy well and their behaviour is better than their peers. They have also made better progress than those students who did not attend the summer school.
- Part of the alternative provision is paid for by pupil premium money. The attainment of the students who attend the alternative provision is tracked carefully. These students are achieving nationally recognised qualifications which are suitably matched to their needs and interests. Overall these students make better progress than their peers.
- Levels of attainment on entry to the sixth form are low. Some students make good progress on their courses but the rates of progress vary across courses. Pass rates on vocational courses are high.
- There is a bespoke literacy course for a small number of boys in Year 7. This is provided in conjunction with Leeds Rhinos and has improved not only the literacy levels of the students involved but also their behaviour in school. The programme has also engaged parents and carers in supporting their sons' literacy development.
- Not all staff focus on developing the students' literacy levels in lessons. There is a literacy policy in place but it is not embedded into day to day teaching and this is limiting the progress the students make.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Staff's expectations of what the students can achieve are too low. School leaders are tackling this and have put in place a more robust and challenging target-setting system for students. This has improved the progress students make but their progress is still inadequate.
- In too many lessons students are all asked to complete the same work. Some students find the work too hard, and others find it too easy. The challenge provided, especially for the more-able students, is not high enough. In a few of these lessons where students all have to complete the same work, some students engage in low-level misbehaviour because the teaching is not engaging or motivating.
- Many lessons focus on the tasks students need to complete rather than on what they need to learn. The pace of learning is too slow and teachers do not provide enough time for the students to think, limiting the progress they make. Often the questions teachers ask students are superficial and do not challenge them to think about their answers or deepen their understanding of the work completed.
- In good lessons, such as a Year 10 science lesson in which the students were investigating the factors which cause earthquakes, teachers plan engaging activities. Work planned is challenging but also based on the needs of the students. In these lessons there are good relationships between staff and students and feedback to students is effective because they know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve.
- There are examples of very good marking, for example in history. Some marking clearly explains

to the students what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work. Often students are not given the opportunity to reflect and act upon the comments made and this means they keep repeating the same mistakes. Teachers' verbal assessment of the students' work is particularly strong in physical education lessons; this means students are able to quickly understand what they need to do to improve and then do so.

- Homework is rarely set. The academy has put in place recently a new policy for homework but it is too early to judge its impact on students' progress.
- In some lessons teaching assistants support students well. This is because they are an integral part of the lesson and challenge the students, through questioning, to think. However, some teaching assistants are not given the chance to support the students because the lesson is poorly planned.
- In the sixth form, students are given opportunities to develop independent learning skills which enable them to make the next steps in their education. Teaching in the sixth form is stronger than in Years 7 to 11.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Attendance is improving but it is low. The proportion of the students who are persistently absent is still high. New strategies are in place to work with parents and carers to improve attendance and there are signs these are having a positive impact on improving attendance.
- Bullying is exceptionally rare. When it does occur it is dealt with very swiftly. Students are fully aware of the different types of bullying including that which happens in the 'virtual world'. The sixth form students are very astute about the issues surrounding social networking and have supported younger students in the academy to understand about e-safety. Students feel safe, and they are safe.
- In lessons which are good, students work well together. They are engaged and motivated to learn. They support each other to do better, for example in a Year 7 physical education lesson students helped each other to improve their skills and work better as a team. However in some lessons, when students are not engaged because they all have to complete the same work, some lose their concentration and stop working.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- In the last academic year there has been a concerted effort by the senior leadership team, governors and the academy chain to improve the quality of teaching and the progress students make. Although these are both inadequate, teaching has improved and students are making more progress than in previous years.
- Senior leaders are aware of weaknesses in the quality of teaching and professional development activities are in place to improve teaching. There is a structured monitoring programme; however, faculty leaders are less involved in the monitoring of teaching and have had less training than senior leaders to undertake this part of their role.
- The system for managing the performance of teachers, in the past, rewarded teachers who did not have high enough expectations of the students. The new system is more rigorous and already is having a positive impact on improving the progress made by students.
- The whole-academy tracking system and use of data are strong. This allows senior leaders to see where the strengths and weaknesses are and put in place strategies to eliminate the weaknesses. The system has been refined this year to make it more powerful and effective in improving students' progress.
- The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is promoted effectively through lessons, assemblies and 'themes of the week'. The curriculum is broad and balanced and based on what the students need. A particular strength is the alternative provision which has re-engaged students and provided them with the qualifications to enable them to take the next steps in their lives. As a result, the proportion of students who are not in education, employment

or training at the end of Year 13 is low.

- The policy on early entry in mathematics was reviewed and changed at the start of the 2012-2013 academic year. The policy is now based on the individual needs of students. The new policy has contributed to the rising levels of attainment in mathematics in 2013.
- The single central record and recruitment procedures meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors agree with the clear vision of the principal and associate principal. The governors are aware of the gaps in students' progress. They monitor effectively the spending of the pupil premium money which is improving the progress of these students. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching and the impact it has on the progress students make. They have attended training and use their knowledge and skills to challenge senior leaders.
 - The academy chain has monitored the academy and is offering support and guidance at senior leadership level. It is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the academy and is working closely with the Principal and associate principal to offer well-focused support.

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>

Academy details

Unique reference number	135969
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	408844

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

Type of school	Academy sponsor-led
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,119
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sally Cieslik
Principal	Colette Jones
Date of previous school inspection	May 2012
Telephone number	0113 336 8448
Fax number	0113 276 0936
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