

# Lees Brook Community School

Morley Road, Chaddesden, Derby, DE21 4QX

**Inspection dates** 10–11 December 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Too few of the most able students attain the higher level grades in English.
- Teachers do not always set work that is demanding enough to challenge the most able students.
- Students' progress in geography, history, modern foreign languages and science requires improvement.
- In some subjects students do not have a strong enough grasp of what they need to do to improve their work.
- Progress in lessons sometimes slows down, due to lack of concentration and low-level disruptive behaviour.
- In some subjects the basic skills of reading and writing are not taught well enough.
- The attendance of disadvantaged students is below average.
- Not all staff with subject leadership responsibilities have a strong enough grasp of the school's systems for tracking students' progress.
- School leaders have not ensured that progress and teaching are at least good in all subjects.
- The governing body has not always applied procedures correctly when responding to complaints.

### The school has the following strengths

- Students' progress in English is improving and they make outstanding progress in mathematics.
- Students also do well in design and technology, dance, drama and physical education.
- Provision for students' personal development and for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Provision for sixth-form students who attend the Skills Academy is outstanding.
- The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs, and those supported by the pupil premium funding, is improving.
- Attendance is also improving and the number of students who are excluded is falling.
- Governors are knowledgeable about students' progress and about the quality of teaching.

### Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 55 lessons, across a range of subjects. They were accompanied by the headteacher or a senior member of staff on 12 of the observations.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the senior leadership team, members of the governing body, and members of staff who have additional responsibilities, such as subject leadership, teachers and students.
- Inspectors looked at students' work and considered documents about the school's self-evaluation, its plans for improvement and arrangements to ensure that students are safe.
- Inspectors also took account of the views expressed in the 72 responses to Ofsted's on line survey, Parent View, the school's recent survey of parents' views and the opinions shared through 64 questionnaires returned by members of staff.

### Inspection team

Godfrey Bancroft, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Macfarlane	Additional Inspector
Anne McAvan	Additional Inspector
Sian Sewell	Additional Inspector
Russell Ayling	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is a little larger than average.
- Just over a quarter of students are entitled to a free school meal and consequently the additional government pupil premium funding (which is also provided for looked-after children). This is broadly average.
- Under a tenth of students are from minority ethnic groups and even fewer speak English as an additional language. Both these proportions are below the national average.
- More than one fifth of students are disabled or have special educational needs. This is above average.
- The school has a sixth form, the Skills Academy, which specialises in providing vocational courses for students who in most cases have no prior educational or vocational qualifications. The majority of students who attend are disabled or have special educational needs and come from a wide area across South Derbyshire.
- The school also manages an Enhanced Resource Provision. This provision caters for up to 20 students at any one time from across the city of Derby. Students who attend are disabled or have special educational needs or face other barriers to their learning. The aim of the provision is to re-integrate students into mainstream lessons.
- The school has a small number of students who are dual registered and taught offsite. These students attend Kingsmead, the Island Project or Derby Pride. Others are taught in hospital or at home.
- The school meets the current government floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school converted to become an academy in September 2011, before the previous inspection.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it becomes at least good in all subjects and results in students making progress that is consistently good or better by:
  - always challenging the most able students by setting work for them that is demanding enough
  - ensuring students understand precisely what they need to do to make their work even better
  - checking that students are acting upon the advice they are given about how to improve their work
  - making sure that students apply themselves to work straight away at the start of lessons and maintain their concentration and effort
  - making sure that teachers of all subjects contribute to the improvement of students' basic skills of reading and writing
  - sharing more widely the excellent practice that is already in place in some subjects, such as mathematics.
- Ensure that the arrangements to keep track of students' progress and to identify the next steps in their learning are used to best effect in all subjects.
- Sustain the drive that is already bringing about improvements in students' attendance to ensure that the attendance of disadvantaged students is similar to that of the others.
- Ensure that when complaints are made either by students, their parents or by members of staff that they are followed up thoroughly by leaders, managers and governors and in line with the school's policy.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- Some subjects have been slow to respond to the initiatives of school leaders to enhance students' progress. This has reduced their effectiveness in bringing about improvements in subjects such as science. While some subjects have embraced the initiatives to improve teaching and are forging ahead, others have so far failed to grasp the good practice, resulting in students' progress slowing down. The picture is the same for students' behaviour. In some subjects students consistently work hard while in others they take too long to settle down and do not sustain their effort.
- Not all subject leaders and heads of department apply new procedures for tracking students' progress effectively and so are unclear about how well students are doing in their subjects.
- Arrangements to appraise and manage the performance of staff and to reward good teaching are firmly linked to targets for bringing about improvements in students' progress. School leaders are frequent observers of lessons and know where the most effective teaching is and what needs to be improved. Some staff are delighted with the support they receive from school leaders. However, others say they are demoralised and their morale is low. Courses for the continued professional development of staff have had a mixed impact.
- The headteacher, senior staff and the governing body are united in their commitment to bring about improvements. They work effectively to ensure equality of opportunity for all students and to make certain that no students become the victims of discrimination.
- The leadership and management of the sixth form Skills Academy is outstanding. This is because leaders ensure that every student is provided with a course that meets their needs exceptionally well.
- The leadership of the Enhanced Resource Provision, in terms of promoting students' progress, is bringing about some good outcomes. The provision helps students to overcome the challenges they face, raises their self-esteem and helps them to become increasingly good learners as they re-integrate into mainstream classes.
- The school's evaluation of its performance has correctly identified what is working well and what needs to be improved. Plans to bring about the identified improvements are also in place. They show clearly how developments will be brought about and how their success will be measured.
- Pupil premium funding is used wisely to support those who are entitled to benefit from it. Students are often taught individually or in small groups that target work precisely at their needs.
- Learning opportunities in the various subjects are inconsistent in the degree to which they bring about good progress. Some, such as mathematics and physical education are very successful, while others are not. That said, the promotion of students' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Through assemblies, a range of personal development initiatives, such as the school council, peer mentoring and opportunities to fulfil leadership roles, students are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They also have a good understanding of traditional British values. Students have a good understanding and are sensitive towards those who have different beliefs and come from different backgrounds and cultures. Students also appreciate the range of additional activities the school provides, particularly in dance, drama, music and sport.
- Parents' views of the school vary. Some are highly delighted with all aspects of the school's work while others are somewhat unhappy. Writing on Ofsted's online Parent View survey a quarter of all respondents said they would not recommend the school to others. Some parents also feel the school does not take account of their views or listen enough when they complain. However, the school's own survey, undertaken at the start of the autumn term, which attracted a larger number of respondents, revealed a more positive picture.
- Since becoming an academy the school has continued to work closely with the local authority and to

purchase its services. Good support is provided and where improvements are evident, for example in the teaching of mathematics, the effective liaison between school leaders and local authority staff is evident.

- The school's arrangements for safeguarding students meet current requirements and are effective. This includes checks to find out whether there is any reason why the adults they employ should not work with young people.
- School leaders keep a close check on the attendance, behaviour and progress of students who, while registered with the school, are taught at other provision.
- Students receive good advice that helps to guide them into the next stages of their education or into the world of work. This is particularly true of the students who follow the vocational courses provided by the sixth form.

#### ■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance requires improvement. This is because there have been instances when complaints procedures have not been applied as thoroughly as they should and complaints have not been followed up with sufficient rigour. This has led to dissatisfaction among some students, parents and members of staff.
- In other respects, governors are very supportive of school leaders, but are not afraid to ask challenging questions about any aspect of the school's work they feel is not going as well as it should. They are well placed to do this as they are very knowledgeable about how well the various groups of students are progressing. Governors are frequent visitors to the school, both formally and informally. They hold regular meetings with senior leaders and those with subject leadership responsibilities. These meetings provide governors with a good insight into how well things are doing. They are also very knowledgeable regarding the impact of additional funding, such as the pupil premium and the Year 7 catch-up funding in bringing about improvements in students' progress. Governors fulfil their duties well in respect of checking on the performance management of staff and understanding how teachers are rewarded for the improvements they bring to students' learning. Governors have also worked closely with school leaders to ensure the agenda for raising students' awareness of life in modern Britain along with its traditions and values has a sufficiently high profile.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

#### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. There are too many lessons in which teachers do not ensure that students apply themselves to their work straight away and progress stalls because of inappropriate talking and lack of concentration.
- Around the school students are courteous and friendly towards each other and towards adults. Many talk happily about how much they enjoy school and about their work and ambitions.
- Staff who lead alternative provision for students affirm their behaviour is good. Many of the students who attend the Enhanced Resource Provision have traditionally struggled to behave well. Staff are effective at helping students to overcome these challenges and many experience significant improvements in their behaviour.
- The behaviour of students in the sixth-form Skills Academy is outstanding and they consistently commit themselves to working hard on all their courses.
- Attendance is improving. After a significant period during which attendance fell below the national average it is now back up and close to the level it should be. However, within this picture the attendance of disadvantaged students, while improving, remains below average.
- The number of students excluded for unacceptably poor behaviour has fallen. The school has effective arrangements for catering for students on site without having to exclude them and for re-integrating them

back into mainstream lessons. Such arrangements are undertaken successfully with as little disruption to students' learning as possible. Inspectors saw students who were part of the internal exclusion provision who were working well together, getting on with their work and clearly enjoying their lessons.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Parents are confident their children are safe at Lees Brook. The majority of students responding to the school's student voice survey say they feel safe, a view which was also expressed by students who spoke with inspectors.
- Inspection evidence affirms that everything necessary is done to ensure that students who are educated at alternative, off-site provision are also safe.
- Students say that instances of bullying in any form are rare. Should bullying occur students are confident that staff will ensure their concerns are resolved amicably. For their part students are well aware of what constitutes the various forms of bullying; such as racist and homophobic bullying. The vast majority of students treat each other with care and sensitivity and are very much aware of the needs of those less fortunate than themselves.
- The school works effectively to ensure that students are aware of how to keep themselves safe. Students recognise the potential hazards posed by the misuse of alcohol, drugs, the internet and social media.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent across subjects. In some cases, teaching results in progress that requires improvement. This happens when activities are not set at the right level for students and are not designed precisely enough to move them on to the next stage of learning.
- There are still too many lessons in which the work set for the most able students is not demanding enough. Again, in this respect mathematics, dance, drama and physical education provide notable exceptions.
- Teachers' marking also varies in quality. There are instances in which work goes almost unmarked. In other cases marking is detailed and helpful. Similarly, some teachers follow up marking and ensure that students are clear about what they have to do to improve. Others do not check to see that students have responded to their comments.
- There are some classes in which students are unsure about their targets and how they should achieve them. In other lessons students are fully involved in checking how well they have done, sharing their observations with their classmates and with teachers who reinforce the message about what the students should do to make their work even better.
- The teaching of the basic skills of reading and writing also varies across different subjects. Some subjects, such as physical education, give this a high profile; while in others it is a neglected priority.
- In some subjects teaching is vibrant, challenging, captures students' enthusiasm for learning and ensures that, over time, students make good progress. In the case of mathematics, teaching ensures that progress is exceptional.
- Teaching for students who attend groups in the Enhanced Resource provision is good. They benefit greatly from activities that are carefully tailored to helping them to catch up with work they have not grasped fully first time around.
- Teaching for students in the sixth form is excellent and they are provided with courses and activities that are ideally suited to their individual learning needs.

- Teaching assistants often make a valuable contribution to supporting students from a wide range of groups. They are involved in supporting the work of teachers, often with lower ability sets and at other times working with students in specially designed intervention groups. This applies to students who may be temporarily excluded from mainstream lessons, disadvantaged students, those with disabilities and special educational needs and those entitled to the Year 7 catch-up funding. In these settings, students from these groups invariably make good progress because their needs are understood and work is matched carefully to the stage they have reached.

### **The achievement of pupils** requires improvement

- In recent years, the proportion of students gaining 5 A\*-C passes, including English and mathematics, has fallen away from being close to the national average to being below because of weaknesses in English. However, the school's assessments of students' progress and the work seen in their books indicate that standards for the current Year 11 are likely to be close to the national average. Even so, there are some marked variations between subjects.
- While standards and progress in English are improving, the proportion of students exceeding the expected progress is lower than found in many schools and the number achieving the higher A\* and A grades in GCSE examinations is relatively low. Students' progress requires improvement in geography, history, modern foreign languages and science. The proportion of students attaining at the higher grades in these subjects lags behind that found in many other schools.
- In some years students join the school with attainment that is close to that expected for their age. However, in the case of the current Year 10 and Year 11, students started with attainment that was below that expected for their age.
- Variations in progress and standards are evident across subjects. Students make exceptional progress in mathematics and attainment year-on-year is above the national average. They also do well in design and technology, dance, drama and physical education.
- Whereas the most-able students do very well in mathematics, with many attaining A\* and A grades in GCSE examinations, the same cannot be said for some other subjects. This applies particularly to the key subjects of English and science.
- A brighter picture is emerging for those students who are eligible to benefit from the pupil premium funding. For some years their progress was not good enough. However, the school has used the funding to good effect and disadvantaged students are narrowing the gap on those in other groups in the school. At worst, many are now less than one grade behind in both English and mathematics. Some of these students are making better progress and attaining higher standards than those who are not disadvantaged. They are also doing as well as similar students in other schools and are closing the gap on students from other schools who are not disadvantaged. In 2014 they were in the region of one GCSE grade behind and, in some cases, a grade ahead of other students nationally.
- A very similar picture is evident in respect of those students who are entitled to benefit from the Year 7 catch-up funding. The purchase of electronic books is proving to be successful in switching these students on to the pleasure of reading.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are showing clear signs that their rate of progress is improving. This is because they are supported well and interventions are tailored carefully to their needs. A similar picture is evident for students who have, for a variety of reasons, been excluded. This is because the school has effective arrangements to reintegrate students when they return to school.
- Students in the sixth-form Skills Academy make excellent progress, often from starting points that are well below expected levels. Many gain vocational qualifications which give them confidence and help them to be well prepared for adult life.

- The achievement of students taught in the Enhanced Resource Provision is good. This is because staff provide them with work that is matched precisely to their needs. As a result the rate at which they progress improves. While the attainment of many of these students stays below average it compares favourably and is often better than that of students facing similar difficulties in other schools.
- The school tracks the progress of those students who are taught elsewhere carefully. There is close co-operation between school staff and the alternative providers, which results in the majority of students doing well and steadily overcoming any difficulties that they might have encountered in the past.
- The school enters students early for a variety of GCSE courses. While this does not present a barrier to gaining higher grades in mathematics the same cannot be said for English where too few students attain A\* and A grades compared with those in other schools.

### **The sixth form provision**

### **is outstanding**

- Many students start at the Skills Academy without having gained any previous qualifications. Most have attended special schools and have moderate learning difficulties as well as having faced other challenges to their progress in education. Only a few of the students have previously attended Lees Brook.
- The leadership and management of the Skills Academy are highly effective. The range of courses on offer prove to be very appealing to students. This is because every care is taken to guide students towards courses that capture their interest and lead to formal qualifications that will serve them well in the world of work.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. Arrangements to ensure they are safe and secure are also outstanding. Students are very appreciative of the care and attention that is rightly lavished on them. They settle in quickly and get along very well with each other and with the adults who teach them. Many students make remarkable gains in their self-confidence and talk with great enthusiasm about the courses they follow. They work hard and clearly enjoy learning. Students are very appreciative that the academy helps them to experience success, often for the first time.
- Students receive excellent teaching from adults who are enthusiastic and are experts in their field. Teachers quickly assess how they might best help students to progress. They find just the right materials and adapt their approach to meet students' individual learning needs. They also assess students' progress accurately and are particularly astute in helping students to understand how they can improve their work. Teachers are also skilful in helping students to acquire the basic skills they need in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and information and communication technology.
- The majority of students make exceptional progress from what are often very low starting points. The majority go on to attain either a level one or level two accreditation in their chosen vocational courses. Some go on to attain even higher levels. Their progress is underpinned by the excellent gains they make in the acquisition of basic skills. Qualifications in courses such as beauty therapy, catering, construction and hairdressing help many students to move on into employment.



## 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>	137420
<b>Local authority</b>	Derby
<b>Inspection number</b>	454437

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<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>	1149
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	70
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Hazel Till
<b>Headteacher</b>	Phil Dover
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 November 2011
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