

South Leeds Academy

Old Run Road, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS10 2JU

Inspection dates

13–14 December 2016

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Outcomes for pupils are too low. Pupils do not attain as well as they should.
- Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able, do not make enough progress over time from their starting points across a range of subjects.
- The school’s performance has been below the government’s floor standards in both of the last two years.
- Until recently, governors and senior leaders did not take effective action to improve pupils’ behaviour and the outcomes they achieve.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate. Teachers do not make effective use of information about pupils’ progress to plan learning activities that support and challenge pupils at appropriate levels.
- Pupils do not attend well and too many are persistently absent.
- A small number of pupils do not behave as well as they should.
- Middle leaders are not effective in improving the quality of teaching in their teams.

The school has the following strengths

- The principal, senior leaders, members of the education advisory board and the academy trust are addressing the school’s weaknesses with much-needed urgency.
- Senior leaders are taking swift action to improve the quality of teaching.
- Most pupils behave sensibly in lessons and around the school most of the time.
- Leaders in the sixth form have increased students’ focus on their studies. Teaching is effective and, as a result, most students make at least expected progress.
- Pupils are open, friendly and accept each other’s different backgrounds and beliefs.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in all subjects and across year groups, by ensuring that teachers:
 - use information about pupils' progress to plan learning that challenges and supports pupils to accelerate their progress, especially that of disadvantaged and most-able pupils
 - respond rapidly to the advice given by leaders on how to improve their practice.
- Improve the personal development, behaviour and well-being of pupils, by ensuring that:
 - all pupils and their families are supported and challenged to attend school regularly, especially disadvantaged pupils
 - the curriculum meets the needs and interests of pupils who have a track record of poor attendance and negative attitudes to school
 - all teachers follow leaders' advice on planning well-pitched lessons to reduce instances of poor behaviour
 - the positive behaviour shown by the large majority of pupils is celebrated, so as to encourage others to follow suit.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, by ensuring that:
 - school leaders develop middle leaders' skills, so that they support and challenge teachers to improve their practice
 - leaders check that programmes of study ensure timely, effective coverage of essential knowledge and understanding to avoid gaps in pupils' learning
 - actions to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence are closely monitored and developed to increase their effectiveness
 - the education advisory board and board of trustees challenge each other and school leaders to check whether their actions are bringing about rapid and sustained improvements
 - spending plans for additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and those entering the school with low levels of attainment are monitored effectively, to check that they are quickly making a positive difference
 - school leaders at all levels are held to account for the effectiveness of arrangements to support pupils' personal development and achievement
 - leaders in the sixth form check attendance rigorously, so all students benefit from the full range of activities and learning experiences provided.

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

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- There have been significant changes in the senior leadership of the school this term. The current, experienced principal has been in post for five weeks, brokered by Delta Academies Trust, the multi-academy trust responsible for the school. An experienced executive principal from the trust works on site for two to three days per week alongside the principal.
- Previously, leadership was not effective in improving the attainment and progress of pupils. Achievement overall and for groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, has been well below national averages in each of the last two years and below the government's minimum floor standards.
- Leaders did not take effective action to improve attendance and reduce the rates of persistent absence. The level of fixed-term exclusion is high.
- Current senior leaders have rapidly and accurately identified what needs to be improved most urgently. They are setting about making rapid improvements with energy and drive, thus generating a sense of momentum among staff. They know that the school's previous performance has been weak for too long.
- Senior leaders have established their vision for high-quality provision that supports pupils' personal development, keeps them safe and promotes their achievement. They pursue rapid improvement with vigour and determination. They have successfully won over teaching staff, the vast majority of pupils and, increasingly, the local community in this shared endeavour. The most recent parents evening was very well attended by parents and pupils.
- Leaders accept that the recruitment and retention of good-quality teachers has been difficult. They are working closely with partners across the trust and further afield to secure a good supply of teachers as posts become vacant.
- A small number of parents' comments were received from Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. The vast majority were very positive about the quality of education their children are now receiving.
- Senior leaders have galvanised teachers to improve outcomes for pupils. Teachers attend weekly professional development focusing on the quality of teaching. As a result, some teaching is improving but not enough is consistently effective. Too many pupils do not make enough progress from their different starting points. As a consequence of poor teaching and leadership in the past, much teaching is devoted to filling the gaps in pupils' knowledge. This hinders their current progress.
- Leaders have recently introduced a strict code of behaviour with attendant rewards and sanctions. Clear expectations of behaviour are applied consistently by staff. Consequently, pupils know what is expected of them. The vast majority of pupils welcome these changes. However, attendance remains very low and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is very high. When teaching is not engaging, some pupils do not behave as well as they should.

- Leaders' consistent focus on changing the culture of learning has led to a rapid decline in the number of pupils who are late. There has been a significant decline in the number of recorded incidents of serious misbehaviour this term, when compared to the previous term. Pupils report that they now feel safe in school and can get on with their learning with little disruption. However, when work is not pitched at the right level, some pupils misbehave and sometimes disrupt others' learning.
- Leaders have taken urgent steps to improve progress in English and mathematics in Year 11 through, for example, focused and intensive interventions. As a result, pupils are catching up lost ground quickly.
- Senior leaders have revised the curriculum, providing a better balance of time allocation to core subjects in key stage 4. This gives pupils opportunities to make more progress more quickly in these subjects. Leaders have maintained the breadth of learning experiences that contribute to preparing pupils well for the next steps in education and training.
- As a consequence of the recent changes in the curriculum in key stage 3, Year 7 pupils, who are not burdened by the legacy of ineffective teaching and the poor curriculum planning of the past, are making better progress than many older pupils.
- Year 7 catch-up premium is being used effectively to improve the literacy and communication skills of pupils who entered the school with low levels of prior attainment. The firm focus on improving reading is helping pupils to increase their reading ages and access the wider curriculum more readily.
- Additional funding to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils has not been used effectively. Too many disadvantaged pupils do not make good progress across year groups and a range of subjects. However, disadvantaged pupils in Years 7 and 11 are beginning to make faster progress as a result of additional lessons and personalised support.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make enough progress overall. Pupils with an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) or a statement of special educational needs make broadly expected progress from their individual starting points.
- External, experienced subject specialist teachers from the trust are bringing added strength to teaching in key stage 4 classes. They work in the school for two to three days per week. They model good practice and contribute to the development of more effective middle leadership.
- Middle leaders have not improved the quality of teaching in their areas quickly enough. Senior leaders have taken action to improve middle leadership and the quality of teaching. They conduct frequent 'challenge meetings' with middle leaders. This brings rigour that identifies weak teaching and pupils' underachievement quickly. By modelling challenge in this way, senior leaders are beginning to improve subject leaders' capacity to support and challenge their own team members more effectively. Senior leaders are determined to build on this early start.
- Leaders in the sixth form now ensure that there is a firm focus on students' achievement. Students have responded positively to this change. Teaching is more effective in ensuring that students make at least expected progress. Leaders ensure that students have a range of opportunities to engage in work-related learning and

provide a varied enrichment programme. However, some students do not attend frequently enough and sometimes miss opportunities to engage with the enrichment programme. Leaders have not tackled this quickly enough.

Governance of the school

- The previous trust board did not take timely action to intervene to secure better outcomes for pupils. When the trust introduced changes in the past, it did not pursue them with enough rigour or check whether they were bringing about the intended improvements. The current board of directors and the current chief executive officer have a well-informed and accurate view of the school. They recognise the school's areas of inadequacy and its relative strengths. They have acted quickly since September to put in place structural changes in the school, with experienced and successful senior staff. As a result, a cohesive approach to bringing about urgent improvement has been established.
- Governors now share a sharpened and more realistic view of the school with leaders. As a result, governors are better placed to form their own views on the quality of pupils' work, and so can challenge senior leaders more effectively. They are active in visiting the school to talk with pupils and check on their behaviour. The chair of governors is realigning governor responsibilities to reflect the priorities correctly identified in the new school development plan. Such focused activities are improving governors' effectiveness.
- Governors recognise that the pupil premium funding had not been spent effectively in the past. They have arranged for an external review of the use of pupil premium funding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Governors have a secure understanding of the risks that pupils face. They have carried out suitable training to ensure that processes for appointing staff have a firm focus on keeping children safe. The nominated governor for safeguarding meets regularly with the school's designated safeguarding lead to gain an overview of current concerns and incidents. The school keeps accurate records of all the required checks they carry out on all the staff in the school, and on supply teachers and visitors.
- Pupils who need extra help are supported well by the safeguarding team. Carefully kept records and attendance at multi-agency meetings help ensure that they receive a coherent package of support with other agencies.
- Teachers, other adults and lunchtime staff complete annual update training. They have a secure understanding of a range of types of abuse and neglect and know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil, or if a pupil makes a disclosure. Advice to staff in the safeguarding policy is simple and clear. Records of the steps taken by the school in child protection cases are kept assiduously. This helps ensure that pupils in need of support get the help they require.
- Leaders make regular contact with alternative providers to check that pupils are attending and being kept safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teaching does not enable all pupils and groups of pupils to make enough progress from their different starting points across a range of subjects.
- Teachers do not use all the information they have about pupils and their progress to plan learning that supports and challenges pupils effectively. When teaching is not pitched accurately, some pupils become bored. They lose concentration and their learning slows.
- Teachers use the behaviour system in lessons to complement their largely positive relationships with pupils. As a consequence, most pupils try hard and apply themselves well to tasks.
- Ineffective teaching in the past is hindering current learning. Too often, teachers have to concentrate on filling the gaps in pupils' knowledge. Teachers do not keep a sharp enough eye on the quality of the current work pupils are producing to check that it comes up to expectations.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not make enough progress because the quality of teaching across subjects is too variable. Teaching does not provide a consistent diet of well-targeted support and challenge that responds to their particular needs. At times, teachers set tasks that are too easy and, at other times, do not give pupils enough time to get to grips with the tasks they are set.
- Too frequently, the most able disadvantaged pupils are not challenged to make enough progress. Teachers do not recognise quickly enough that tasks are too easy or have been finished quickly so they cannot move pupils on to stretch them and deepen their thinking. Other most-able pupils are similarly restricted in the progress they can make.
- The school's focus on developing pupils' reading skills is considered by leaders to be a key factor in improving learning. Lower-attaining pupils, especially in key stage 3, are supported increasingly well to develop their reading skills, using the school's adopted reading recovery scheme. Most-able pupils are similarly encouraged to read. However, teachers do not recognise these pupils' skills well enough in designing challenging tasks that deepen their understanding.
- Additional capacity provided by trust's specialist subject teachers in English and mathematics is strengthening the quality of teaching and beginning to improve the practice of other staff. Recently introduced intensive training, held weekly, is raising teachers' expectations of pupils.
- Teachers benefit from sharper monitoring and are using their learning from professional development sessions to improve their practice. As a result, Year 7 pupils, who do not have the gaps in learning seen in other year groups, are making much stronger progress. In some cases, they are producing better-quality work than pupils with similar starting points in Year 8.
- Pupils in Year 11, in particular, benefit from the intensive additional support they receive to improve their progress in English and mathematics. Their progress is checked very frequently and interventions are amended to suit their individual needs.
- In the short period of time since putting interventions in place in Year 11, leaders and

teachers have enabled a much higher proportion of pupils to be on track to make at least expected progress than was the case at this point in the previous year.

- Teachers are well informed about the particular needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. However, the variation in the quality of teaching means that these groups also make slow progress overall.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Some pupils have not developed the readiness to stick at tasks and maintain the good standards of behaviour expected of them. Some unacceptable behaviour shows occasionally that a small number of pupils do not value their education or that of others.
- In their day-to-day interactions, pupils show respect and tolerance towards others who are from different backgrounds or have different lifestyles and beliefs. As a result, pupils can quickly recognise right from wrong. Pupils' interactions with each other reflect the school's work to promote equality and diversity and promote fundamental British values.
- Pupils learn about different cultures and backgrounds through lessons in humanities, for example, in tutor time and through assemblies. They learn about keeping themselves safe when using the internet and understand the unhappiness bullying of any kind, including cyber bullying, can cause. Pupils have good knowledge of the potential dangers of social networking sites, for instance.
- Instances of bullying are rare this term. Pupils report that bullying used to be a problem but that now they feel safe and well cared for. Some pupils who had been bullied in the past told inspectors that staff have acted to resolve bullying issues effectively since the beginning of this year. Pupils know that they can seek help from staff if they have a worry and are confident that they will be listened to and helped.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the diverse community they live in and which is reflected in the school's pupil population. They mix and chat pleasantly with one another during break and lunchtimes. Pupils are adamant that racial bullying or other prejudice-based bullying is almost unheard of. Pupils have a sensitive and mature understanding of other lifestyles and sexuality. For example, pupils present talks on issues relating to being gay, lesbian or transgender.
- Pupils in the alternative provision develop more positive attitudes to their learning and engage positively in courses, especially in practical subjects. This helps prepare them for their next steps in education and training.
- Good-quality business links and careers guidance is helping pupils make informed choices about their futures and is raising their aspirations for their futures.
- Pupils enjoy making a contribution to their local community. For example, they recently invited senior citizens to the school for lunch. Both visitors and pupils enjoyed the event.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate. This is because too many pupils do not attend school frequently enough. Too many pupils miss large amounts of schooling, including vulnerable pupils and those who are disadvantaged.
- Some pupils engage in low-level disruption in lessons, when learning is not engaging or does not meet their needs. When not closely supervised by staff, some pupils engage in boisterous and poor behaviour, for example at lesson change-over.
- On a very few occasions, inspectors noted that individual pupils refused to follow teachers' instructions.
- The great majority of pupils behave sensibly around the school and in most lessons. Pupils are willing to learn, but can become bored when teaching is not effective. Pupils report that behaviour has improved greatly since the introduction of the new behaviour policy. Most pupils welcome the stricter and clearer code of behaviour. This helps them learn in a calmer and more orderly environment.
- Senior leaders have refocused the attendance team's work and are active in meeting with pupils and families to promote better attendance.
- Leaders recognise that the new behaviour code led initially to a sharp increase in the number of fixed-term exclusions. While this is still too high, it is beginning to reduce quickly. There have been no permanent exclusions this year.
- Pupils who attend the alternative provision begin to improve their attendance once they settle into their new surroundings and routines.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Progress overall and for groups of pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, was very low in both of the past two years. Most-able disadvantaged pupils and other most-able pupils did not achieve as well as others nationally.
- Attainment in a range of subjects was low. As a consequence, too few pupils were prepared well for their next steps in education or training. Overall, the performance of the school, in both of the past two years, has been below the government's floor standards.
- The progress made by current pupils in a wide range of subjects varies greatly. Too often, any better teaching is focused on addressing the legacy of previously ineffective teaching and poor learning. Progress from starting points remains low for many pupils. Effective teaching is not the norm, across year groups, subjects or for groups of pupils. As a result, too few pupils have yet caught up with their learning.
- Pupils in the current Year 7 are making faster progress, as a result of better teaching and improvements in the curriculum.
- Year 7 catch-up funding, to provide additional support for pupils who entered the school with low levels of attainment, is being used this year with greater effect than in the past. Changes to the curriculum, the introduction of discrete sessions to improve literacy and individualised support to meet pupils' needs are helping these pupils, and disadvantaged pupils, to make faster progress.

- Pupils arriving in the school speaking English as an additional language are supported effectively to enable them to access the curriculum and participate in the wider life of the school. They are able to make quick progress through their induction period to acquire the basic language and grammar they need to begin to participate in lessons. Subject teachers are provided with guidance on how to help them further. As is the case for other groups, however, the progress these pupils make is slow overall.
- Key staff are careful to identify and respond to the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils respond best when teachers in mainstream classes take into account their needs when planning learning activities. For example, the work done in mathematics in Year 11 gave pupils all the support they needed to succeed in understanding trigonometry. However, there is significant variation in the progress these pupils make from their different starting points.
- Year 11 pupils are making rapid progress this term since the introduction of well-focused intensive intervention work in English and mathematics. Many more pupils, disadvantaged and others, are now on track to make expected progress from their starting points on entry to the school than was the case at this point last year.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Attendance is lower than it should be because it is not pursued with all the rigour that could be brought to bear.
- Students enjoy work-related elements of their study programmes. These complement their academic studies, providing insight into other areas that interest them and prepare them effectively for their futures. However, a small number of students choose not to attend some parts of the enrichment programme. This is not addressed quickly enough by leaders.
- In previous years, students did not make good progress, particularly in vocational courses. Improvements in 2016 examinations confirm that, overall, students make similar progress in academic and vocational courses.
- The head of sixth form took up post in September. His ambition and drive for students' success has brought greater focus to their study. As a result, students are motivated and apply themselves well to their study.
- Leaders are building on the recent success in securing better careers advice and guidance to revitalise other elements of the personal development programme, such as teaching students about wider social issues and providing opportunities for student leadership.
- Current students make expected progress and some exceed expectations, for example in health and social studies. Students are committed to their studies, want to do well and try hard. Teaching is effective in helping them achieve well in both academic and vocational courses. As a consequence, current students produce work of high quality that reflects the good progress they make over time.
- Students are supported to resit examinations at GCSE in English and mathematics, to improve their grades if they were below grade 'C' in Year 11, with increasing success. This ensures that students can access a wider range of future employment opportunities, training and higher education routes.

- Safeguarding is effective. Students are aware of the risks to their safety and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
- Increasing numbers of students are staying on to follow sixth-form courses. Students use the effective careers advice and guidance they receive to decide which courses best meet their needs. This is leading to more positive retention figures across the sixth-form partnership.
- Students have opportunities to learn about a range of apprenticeships and visitors from higher education institutions offer students insight into degree-level study. As a consequence, students are able to make well-informed decisions about the next steps in their education and training.

School details

Unique reference number	135969
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10019751

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	962
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	42
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Sally Cieslik
Principal	Graham Moffatt
Telephone number	01132 127147
Website	www.tsla.org.uk
Email address	info@tsla.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is part of the Delta Academies Trust group of schools taking over from the previous academy sponsor during 2015. The school serves its local diverse community in south Leeds, providing education for boys and girls aged between 11 and 19.
- The school makes use of the services provided by an alternative provider, Elland Academy, to provide education for some of its pupils.

- A number of students follow their studies in the sixth form at Garforth Academy.
- The school receives support from a number of subject specialists, employed directly by Delta Academies Trust.
- The principal has been in post since October 2016. An executive principal works in the school for part of each week. The vice-principal, head of sixth form and a number of other leaders have taken up their posts since the beginning of the school year.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held discussions with the principal, the executive principal and other senior and middle leaders in the school.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in lessons, including in the sixth form, across a range of different subjects. Inspectors examined the quality of work pupils produce and considered the progress they make over time.
- A wide range of documentation was examined, including the school’s self-evaluation and planning documents and the records the school holds on pupils’ progress, their attendance and punctuality.
- Meetings were held with representatives of the trust, the trust board of directors and members of the education advisory board.
- Inspectors talked with pupils in meetings and informally during social time. Inspectors also took into account the views of eight parents collected from Parent View, Ofsted’s online survey. Inspectors also considered the views of parents gathered by the school at parents evenings.

Inspection team

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Gillian Fisher	Ofsted Inspector

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