

Langham Oaks

School Road, Langham, Colchester, Essex CO4 5PA

Inspection dates

6–7 February 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Significant staff turnover in the academic year 2016/17 has hindered leaders' ability to secure a consistently good standard of education since becoming an academy in 2015.
- Leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning is not robust enough to secure consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- Leaders, including curriculum leaders, do not routinely act upon their monitoring and therefore do not have a precise understanding of what difference they are making in improving pupils' progress.
- Although governors have worked successfully to improve pupils' personal development, they do not hold leaders to account with regards to pupils' academic progress. This includes the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Teachers do not use assessment information consistently well to inform their teaching so that it meets pupils' needs. Consequently, the rate of progress from individual pupils' starting points, especially for the most able, is reduced.
- Teachers do not use the school's feedback system well enough to ensure that pupils are clear about their 'next steps' in learning.
- Leaders have introduced a new literacy programme. The English lead is providing support for teachers to better assess pupils' reading and writing. However, the training has not been fully completed. Teachers do not yet have the necessary skills required to deliver the programme consistently well.

The school has the following strengths

- All staff are committed to the development of 'the whole child'. As a result, pupils feel safe, well cared for and have trusting relationships with adults.
- Leaders ensure that pupils receive high-quality support and careers advice. Consequently, pupils are ambitious and successfully move on to appropriate post-16 placements.
- Leaders' focus on reading has helped to secure good progress in this area for those pupils who enter the provision with reading ages significantly below the expected standard.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the provision.
- Staff are strong role models and use effective strategies to help pupils develop self-control, self-esteem and improved attitudes to learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders, including governors and the trust, have a precise picture of the school so that their actions and evaluation are accurate and well informed
 - improving the quality of leaders' evaluations, particularly of the use of additional funding, so they know the difference they are making to pupils' academic progress
 - governors holding leaders to account more rigorously about the progress pupils are making from their individual starting points
 - the trust ensuring that school leaders have the right support, and sufficient time, to embed the improved systems they have begun to put in place
 - leaders developing precision in their monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment to ensure a better quality of teaching and learning which secures consistently good progress for pupils
 - ensuring that staff have access to training which will improve their ability to assess pupils' writing skills.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so pupils make accelerated progress from their starting points by:
 - teachers consistently using assessment information to plan work for pupils which is more accurately matched to their individual needs, particularly the most able pupils
 - building on pupils' prior learning and using feedback more effectively so pupils are clear on the 'next steps' in their learning
 - sharing the best examples of effective practice in the school.

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

- Since the school became an academy in 2015, there has been a turnover of teaching staff in excess of 50%. Although the trust recognised the impact of this upon leadership capacity, support was not timely enough to ensure that leaders could secure a consistently good standard of education. However, more recently support from the trust has become more stable.
- Until this academic year, instability within the school has hindered leaders' ability to evaluate the difference they are making. Despite leaders being able to accurately identify the strengths and weaknesses in the provision, they have not routinely enough evaluated the impact of their work. This is particularly the case with regard to pupils' progress. Consequently, across the school, pupils' progress is inconsistent in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning has not been sufficiently robust to ensure that all staff are using assessment information consistently. Checking of pupils' work has not occurred as often as it should. Leaders have not held teachers to account rigorously enough, leading to inconsistencies in performance and subsequently, pupils' progress.
- Some subject leaders are new to role and are still in the process of taking full responsibility for monitoring their subject area. Consequently, leaders' new assessment systems are not used consistently across all subjects.
- Leaders have not been precise in their evaluation of the impact of their use of the additional funding they receive for disadvantaged pupils and Year 7 catch-up funding. It is therefore difficult for leaders to be really clear about what works and what does not. Subsequently, disadvantaged pupils' progress is not consistently good or better.
- Leaders have accurately identified the need to raise pupils' literacy skills. They have been successful, through targeted one-to-one interventions, in raising the reading ability of those children who enter the school with the poorest reading skills. However, all staff delivering the literacy programme have not received suitable training to identify pupils' abilities and accelerate progress, for example training to enable them to accurately assess pupils' writing ability. Consequently, pupils' progress in writing, in particular, is inconsistent.
- Staff promote the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Leaders have designed a curriculum which has these aspects woven throughout. Formal learning is supported by a range of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding of others and to improve their skills in a range of artistic, creative and sporting activities. The key stage 2 outdoor learning curriculum has been particularly successful in improving pupils' self-esteem, resilience and determination, subsequently leading to hugely improved attitudes to learning.
- Leaders are resolute in their determination to ensure that pupils have the right provision to meet their behavioural, social and emotional needs. Government funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used effectively to

provide a range of support from external provision and in-school specialists such as a trained play therapist. The team-around-the-group system adopted across the school ensures that the needs of pupils, as identified in their education, health and care plans, are closely monitored and effectively supported.

- Leaders' effective use of the primary physical education (PE) and sport premium funding has led to many pupils developing a love of sport. Pupils are active and regularly participate in sports such as competitive basketball, helping them develop positive attitudes to healthy lifestyles as well as greater self-discipline and teamwork skills.
- Pupils are making better progress in mathematics this academic year. The appointment of a skilled mathematics leader has secured more rapid progress. As a result, pupils' attainment in mathematics is improving, work is of an increasingly consistent standard and pupils are more rapidly securing core mathematical skills.

Governance of the school

- Governors' minutes show variability in the level of challenge and questioning posed to leaders. There has been a lack of focus on ensuring that pupils make the academic progress of which they are capable. Because of this, the extent to which leaders have been held to account for the impact of the spending of pupil premium funding has been inconsistent.
- Governors and trustees do not routinely check that leaders are fulfilling their statutory duties. For example, they have not ensured that leaders have published all of the required information on the school's website. This includes evaluations of the pupil premium spending, PE and sport funding and Year 7 catch-up funding.
- Governors are passionate about the school and the pupils. They visit regularly and take an active interest in gathering the views and opinions of the pupils. They share leaders' vision of creating a provision which enhances the needs of the 'whole child'. As a result, they have ensured that the curriculum provides valuable opportunities to develop life skills that enable the vast majority of pupils to be able to move on to a variety of suitable post-16 provisions, including, in some cases, employment.
- Governors have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities around safeguarding. Their rigour in this area has added to the positive safeguarding culture at the school where all staff see safeguarding as 'everyone's responsibility'.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding records are at a suitable standard and meet statutory requirements. Although there was one omission on the single central record, this was rectified promptly during day one of the inspection.
- Leaders have implemented an effective electronic system for recording and monitoring staff concerns about the safety and well-being of pupils. Staff receive regular training which ensures that they efficiently record their concerns so that any pupils at risk receive timely and appropriate support.

- Pastoral support teams, known as the 'team-around-the group', work closely with the nurture manager, other professionals and families, to ensure that pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs are well met. Any changes in behaviours or vulnerabilities are therefore noticed and responded to quickly.
- Leaders' work to promote pupils' understanding of how to identify and comprehend risk in a wide range of situations is a strength. Consequently, pupils know how to stay safe, including online and from radicalisation, and trust the adults to keep them safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that pupils' assessment information is routinely shared between staff. Because of this, some teachers do not use assessment information well to plan appropriate learning activities. Consequently, pupils are not consistently making the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not always make clear the purpose of the learning activities that pupils are expected to complete. When this is the case, pupils are not able to set to work quickly and the pace of their progress throughout the lesson is hindered.
- In some lessons, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils' books show that, in some cases, pupils are all given the same work regardless of their starting points. The most able pupils are sometimes provided with work which is too easy, whereas the least able pupils are given work which is too hard. On occasions, work does not build effectively on prior learning to ensure that pupils are challenged to achieve what they are capable of.
- Teachers' variability in using the school's feedback system means that pupils' progress is uneven between subjects. For example, pupils' work shows more rapid progress in subjects such as outdoor learning, science and more recently mathematics, where the system is used consistently and well. This is not the case in English or humanities.
- Teachers have started to record pupils' learning in 'learning journals' with photographs and annotations. In the best examples, key stage 2 pupils' outside learning books, the annotations identify precisely what pupils have achieved and the next steps they need to take to improve. Pupils' progress is slower in some subjects, for example the newly introduced literacy sessions, where teachers do not consistently identify what pupils have learned and then follow through on pupils' next steps in learning.
- The teaching of reading to the least able pupils is most effective. Bespoke interventions not only develop pupils' basic reading skills but also enhance their enjoyment and love of reading. In turn, this is having a positive impact on pupils' confidence in lessons, helping them read out loud and share their enjoyment of reading with each other and staff.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Staff know the pupils very well. They are acutely aware of the pastoral needs of each individual. This results in personalised plans being used effectively to support pupils to develop their confidence and ability to communicate with each other. The nurture managers' work to provide pupils with a range of educational and vocational trips leads to pupils becoming increasingly confident in engaging in the world beyond school.
- Leaders ensure that the teaching of personal safety, health and risk management is taught well. A bespoke programme of assemblies, lessons and work with external providers covers a range of topics such as drug awareness, healthy lifestyles, relationships and anti-bullying. Pupils told inspectors that bullying was rare and they are able to trust and talk to staff if they have any worries or concerns.
- Pupils take pride in their work and enjoy their community involvement. This secures increasing levels of respect and an understanding about developing effective citizenship skills. For example, on a termly basis, pupils work with a professional chef to host the 'dining under the oaks' event. Through this event, pupils learn about cooking, horticulture and producing something for the enjoyment of others. Pupils are proud of their participation in this event and the money it raises to improve facilities at the school.
- A large proportion of Year 11 pupils are in receipt of reduced timetables and attend alternative provisions. Their attendance and academic progress in the outreach provisions is monitored and tracked. However, targets and specific actions to increase the amount of teaching time they are receiving are not always precise or reviewed at timely intervals. Consequently, opportunities to ensure that these pupils are making the progress of which they are capable regarding their academic and personal development are reduced.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves around the school well. In particular, during outdoor learning, sports activities, breaktimes and lunchtimes, they interact well together and show respect and courtesy.
- Staff's work through sport and the outside learning programme has led to many pupils quickly developing confidence, self-belief and improved capacity to be successful in an increasing range of social situations. Pupils value the numerous trips and visits they have access to and told inspectors how they are 'learning to be more responsible for their behaviour'.
- Staff are well trained in behaviour management strategies. The calm and consistent approach seen by staff to manage behaviour means that pupils calm down quickly and return to learning. Case studies demonstrate how, over time, pupils' individual behaviour management plans have led to reductions in behaviour incidents and the need for physical restraints.
- Overall, leaders have worked effectively to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence. Individual case studies show significant improvements for many pupils, particularly those in key stage 2 and key stage 3. Newly implemented systems have made it even easier for leaders to track pupils' attendance and act quickly to reverse any reducing trends. However, attendance for a few of the pupils on part-time

timetables remains much lower than the national average.

- In the best examples, when pupils are stimulated by the work teachers have set and staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour, disruption to learning is rare. However, on a few occasions, lower expectations lead to behaviour which disrupts learning.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' rates of progress are variable across the school and between subjects. Slower progress is often linked to the inconsistent use of assessment by teachers to accurately match work to pupils' abilities and starting points.
- Approximately two thirds of the school population are disadvantaged pupils. While they are not necessarily making less progress than their peers in school, leaders' evaluations of the use of the pupil premium funding were not able to provide sufficient evidence that disadvantaged pupils are making consistently good progress to diminish the difference between themselves and other pupils nationally from the same starting points.
- Inspection evidence shows that currently, pupils' progress in writing lags behind that in reading and mathematics. Leaders recognise this and have recently established new literacy groups. It is too early to measure the impact of this programme. Some staff require additional training to ensure that they are fully able to secure rapid progress in this area.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are not routinely set suitably challenging work or provided with feedback which would help facilitate better progress in all subjects. As a result, these pupils are not achieving as well as they could.
- Leaders have secured more consistent progress in reading, especially for the pupils with the lowest reading abilities. Leaders work diligently to ensure that pupils' reading skills are regularly checked. Pupils with the lowest scaled reading scores are placed on a one-to-one reading programme. Monitoring records show significant progress for many of these pupils from their starting points.
- Pupils' work shows consistent and rapid progress in mathematics since September. For example, pupils are demonstrating greater capacity to apply their numerical understanding to problem-solving and reasoning. At key stage 2, pupils are also enhanced effectively through the practical application of mathematics in the outside learning environment.
- Support staff provide effective help and guidance to ensure that pupils successfully move to the next stages of education, training or employment. Pupils benefit from work experience, visits to a range of different provisions and transition support to help them adjust to life beyond school. Consequently, the vast majority of pupils enter into, and sustain, placements in carefully identified training, further education or employment.

School details

Unique reference number	141512
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10041745

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	10 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	69
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Angela Bradding
Headteacher	Emma Paramor
Telephone number	01206 271571
Website	www.langhamoaks.co.uk
Email address	admin@langhamoaks.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to academy status in April 2015. It is a special academy within SEAX Multi Academy Trust, Special Educational Needs Academies.
- Although the leadership team has been consistent since the school became an academy, there has been a turnover of teaching staff in excess of 50%. Both the English and mathematics leaders are new to their roles this academic year.
- Pupils join the school at various times throughout the school year and go into different year groups. Once admitted, pupils generally stay until they leave the provision at the end of key stage 4.
- All of the pupils have an educational health and care plan with a primary need of social, emotional and mental health.
- All of the pupils are boys. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium

funding is significantly above average.

- The school does not meet the 2017 government's floor standards for attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' written work in English, mathematics and outdoor learning books and subjects taught across key stage 3 and key stage 4. A range of additional evidence was reviewed which illustrated pupils' learning, for example learning journals and photographs. They also analysed information about the progress pupils are currently making and their attainment. Prior to inspection, the lead inspector considered published information about pupils' attainment and progress in relation to all pupils nationally.
- Pupils from key stage 3 and 4 read to inspectors and talked about their books.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, during playtime and at lunchtime. They spoke to pupils during their lessons, as well as in organised groups.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, leaders from the trust, the local authority, subject leaders, the leader responsible for key stage 2, special educational needs coordinator and the data manager. Inspectors held discussions with the nurture manager and higher teaching and learning assistant responsible for one-to-one interventions and staff responsible for administration, safeguarding and child protection. The lead inspector also spoke to a representative from the alternative provision which some Year 11 pupils attend.
- Inspectors considered information provided by the school leaders relating to governance, wider school support and challenge, and the leaders' own evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Inspectors looked at a range of leaders' documentation, including policies, self-evaluation, pupils' case studies, the school's development planning and the school's website.
- Inspectors took into account seven responses to Ofsted's free-text system and 18 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The opinions of 16 staff members were also taken into account. Inspectors checked the submitted pupils' questionnaire information but there were no responses to review.

Inspection team

Kerry Grubb-Moore, lead inspector

Paul Copping

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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