

Lyndon School

Daylesford Road, Solihull, West Midlands B92 8EJ

Inspection dates

9–10 May 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
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

- In the past, the school has struggled to attract teachers and leaders in some subject areas. As a result, older pupils have had a time of turbulence in their learning.
- In 2017, pupils' progress was weak across many subjects and groups of pupils.
- Pupils' attendance, though improved considerably, is still below the national average.
- Some systems that leaders have introduced are not yet fully embedded. They need tweaks to make them more effective.
- Current key stage 4 pupils' progress is better than previous cohorts, but is not yet good.
- Teachers do not consistently plan learning that meets pupils' needs. Some teachers do not follow the school's marking and feedback policy consistently.
- Exclusions, internal isolations and behaviour incidents have reduced in number. However, they remain too high. A significant minority of key stage 4 pupils have yet to fully accept the new behaviour policy.

The school has the following strengths

- The newly formed governing body is well informed and understands the school's priorities well.
- Leaders think carefully about pupils' welfare. They take an innovative approach to make sure that they support pupils effectively.
- Leaders know their school well. Their actions to improve the school are effective.
- The newly appointed chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust has swiftly identified the main issues that were holding the school back and wasted no time in solving them.
- Leaders have designed a coherent and broad curriculum. As a result, pupils' progress at key stage 3 is strong and progress at key stage 4 is improving.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress. Do this by:
 - improving some teachers' planning of learning activities that are engaging and relevant
 - sharing and spreading the excellent practice seen in some subject areas
 - making sure that all teachers follow the marking policy closely.
- Improve pupils' behaviour. Do this by:
 - further reducing fixed-term exclusions so that they are at or below the national average
 - reducing the number of internal isolations so that fewer pupils miss their lessons
 - continuing to reduce instances of behaviour issues in lessons
 - working with key stage 4 pupils so that they understand the benefits of the more stringent behaviour standards that leaders have introduced.
- Improve pupils' attendance so that it is at or above the national average overall for all groups of pupils.
- Consistently review newly introduced systems to make them more effective.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- At the time of the school becoming a sponsored academy, the trust did not immediately provide the effective support it needed to rapidly improve outcomes for pupils. As a result of the trust's increased capacity, which led to strengthened leadership, from May 2017 the trust swiftly provided appropriate, effective support. Although teaching, learning, assessment, outcomes and pupils' behaviour are not yet good, as a result of effective trust support and strong school leadership, standards at Lyndon School are improving quickly.
- The principal and an ably supportive new senior team share an uncompromising vision of improvement in the school. They have worked tirelessly and effectively to improve pupils' attendance, behaviour and progress. Their self-evaluation is detailed and accurate, showing that they know their school well.
- Nearly 100 staff responded to the online inspection questionnaire. The vast majority of staff said that they enjoy working at the school and are proud to do so. The vast majority also said that they recognise that the school has improved over the past three years.
- The principal has ensured that almost all vacant teaching posts in the school are now filled, and almost all with qualified subject specialists. Where non-subject specialists teach, they are well supported and have appropriate subject knowledge.
- Leaders' systems to improve teaching are well designed. The training programme for teachers is informed by monitoring in classrooms, work sampling and analysis of pupils' progress. Leaders know teachers' strengths and areas for improvement. They work effectively to improve teaching, support teachers' professional development and increase the rate of pupils' progress. As a result of this well-structured improvement system, pockets of excellent teaching practice are evident in some parts of the school.
- Leaders' planning for the use of pupil premium funding is detailed. They review the impact on pupils very carefully. Leaders have accurately identified the reasons for disadvantaged pupils' weaker progress in the past. They provide targeted support for pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils' progress overall is improving.
- Leaders have developed a coherent key stage 3 curriculum in which assessment is embedded. This allows them to track pupils' progress confidently at key stage 3. The new curriculum is regularly reviewed and leaders have invited tough external scrutiny over it. This scrutiny has led to many improvements and tweaks, further enhancing the curriculum. They identify those pupils at risk of not meeting basic expectations in English and mathematics early in Year 7. This enables effective interventions to be put in place to help pupils make better progress across the curriculum.
- In 2016/17, between Year 9 and Year 10, 19 pupils left the roll of the school. These pupils were from a range of different pupil groups and left to go to a local specialist engineering academy, a local specialist performing arts academy and a range of other local schools. Some are now electively home educated. There is no evidence that leaders have used off-rolling to manipulate progress scores or unofficially exclude pupils. The school works closely with parents who wish to home educate their children.

They explore the reasons for parents' wishes and work closely with them to solve any issues.

- Leaders' work to support pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is increasingly effective. All staff involved in pupils' health, welfare and SEN meet weekly to discuss and review each pupil with whom they work. This means that pupils are closely monitored and their social, health and welfare needs are met well. However, this group does not yet take enough account of pupils' progress academically when reviewing pupils' needs.
- Leaders acknowledge the need to consistently review and sharpen some of their newly introduced systems. For example, they need to develop a better overview of the system for checking assessment accuracy, and leaders for SEN need a stronger oversight of classroom provision. Teachers do not consistently adhere to the school's assessment policy.

Governance of the school

- Governors share leaders' commitment to the school's rapid improvement. They are effective because:
 - the trust has reviewed their membership and structure, strengthening it further with new members and a more streamlined structure
 - leaders increasingly give governors information that enables them to track the school's improvement competently
 - they have a blend of skills, including educational experience
 - they support leaders well and offer appropriate challenge. They expect leaders to consistently report on the impact that they are having
 - they check leaders' work carefully to be sure that is effective.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Vetting checks on staff are complete and leaders have introduced a range of strong systems to keep pupils safe. The designated lead for safeguarding is knowledgeable and experienced.
- All staff share a commitment to safeguarding. Their regular basic training and a variety of specialist units of training mean that they have good knowledge and can spot the signs that pupils need help.
- Leaders identify the most vulnerable pupils and regularly make sure that they have the support that they need to be safe and to succeed. Systems help leaders to be vigilant in spotting potential issues.
- Where leaders need to engage external providers to help pupils, they do so quickly. At times, when this support is challenging to arrange, leaders are tenacious and chase up referrals to make sure that pupils get the help that they need.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- While improving, a lack of consistency in the quality of teaching means that pupils' learning is too often not as strong as it needs to be. In some classes, pupils have limited opportunity to develop or deepen their understanding of topics. Sometimes, lessons are not well enough planned or have tasks that are repetitive, too easy or do not engage pupils' curiosity.
- Teachers' use of questioning is not yet consistently effective across the school. While in some classes pupils are regularly challenged to think hard and develop their ideas, in others, pupils do not benefit from this deeper, open questioning.
- In a minority of cases, pupils' books contain work that is unfinished or that does not reflect their best efforts.
- Leaders have introduced new assessment systems which are well integrated into the curriculum. Assessments are moderated internally and externally. As a result, leaders have an increasingly accurate overview of pupils' overall progress, which pupils need extra support and where teaching is most effective.
- Leaders have identified the low literacy levels of some pupils as a barrier to some pupils' success. They have responded with targeted, effective support for both those pupils with a small gap in their literacy skills and those pupils who need more specialised and ongoing support. These pupils' literacy levels are improving over time.
- There are growing pockets of excellent practice in the school. Where teachers plan engaging lessons that meet pupils' needs, pupils throw themselves into their learning diligently. Inspectors saw examples of pupils working independently, productively in groups and with passion on deeply engaging topics. Inspectors saw examples of a target language-rich environment. This led to high levels of engagement and progress in languages, careful organisation leading to superb, collaborative performances in music, and practical work in geography leading to pupils asking many deeper questions. Leaders acknowledge that they need to harness this developing effective practice to spread it consistently through the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils wear their uniform smartly, are mature in school and the majority have good attitudes to their learning. They have chances to participate in leadership opportunities through the prefect scheme and these prefects are positive ambassadors for their school.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare. They say that they feel safe in school and that if bullying issues occur, they have confidence in staff to deal with it.
- Leaders have introduced a regular meeting of a panel of staff with responsibility for pupils' welfare. This panel brings together a range of expertise and a sharp focus on

improvements in pupils' well-being, engaging external agencies when needed. This panel works effectively to reflect leaders' commitment that no pupil should 'fall through the net'. The regularity of review and monthly formal action plans means that leaders have a strong overview of work to improve pupils' well-being. Leaders acknowledge that this group's work could be improved further by a stronger focus on pupils' academic success.

- Pupils speak confidently about the work that the school does to help them keep safe. For example, they have knowledge of important topics such as grooming, sexting and toxic relationships. The curriculum develops effectively pupils' knowledge of radicalisation and extremism and fundamental British values.
- All pupils at key stage 4 have access to work experience, and support from an independent careers adviser. Pupils across the school enjoy visits from universities, subject taster days and options information events.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Leaders have recently raised their expectations of pupils' behaviour and accompanied this with a clearer, more consistent rewards and sanctions system. Pupils at key stage 3 are used to this system and understand its importance in maintaining good conduct in school. A significant minority of pupils at key stage 4 have not yet fully accepted this new system. They do not have a positive view of it. This affects the level of pride they show in their school.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school building is generally positive. However, a minority of mainly older pupils display boisterous behaviour outside the school in the playground and field. Pupils say that this behaviour does not make them feel unsafe.
- While pupils' attendance has improved sharply, it is still below the national average. Similarly, the number of pupils who are persistently absent has decreased, but remains too high. Though the school actively discourages parents from taking pupils out of school for term-time holidays, some still choose to do this and, as a result, some pupils miss vital learning time.
- In the past, fixed-term exclusions were high and well above the national average. Though the number of internal and external exclusions is still too high, the number has fallen over the past year, as has the number of pupils in internal isolation. This is partly a result of the school's better identification and support of pupils who have social and mental health issues.
- The small number of pupils who are educated in alternative provision make appropriate progress from their starting points. Their attendance, behaviour and progress are closely monitored on a fortnightly basis.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Since the school became an academy, it has suffered from issues with attracting specialist staff and subject leaders in some subjects. This led to some turbulence in

teaching and to too many temporary teachers. As a result of this legacy of weaker teaching, overall pupils made weak progress across a range of subjects in 2016 and 2017. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities made particularly weak progress.

- In 2017, pupils' overall attainment improved and there was a large increase in the percentage of pupils gaining a standard pass in both English and mathematics. There were some marked improvements in pupils' progress in mathematics and English. However, pupils' overall progress remained weaker than other pupils nationally.
- Current pupils have benefited from a longer period of stable and improved teaching. In addition, teachers' improved assessment accuracy and a clearer curriculum mean that they can be more confident about how well pupils are progressing towards their targets. As a result, pupils' progress is much stronger for current key stage 4 pupils.
- Where there are subjects in which pupils are a little behind, leaders know about these issues. They are temporary problems that are being addressed, as opposed to deeper, systemic issues. Where groups of pupils are behind, leaders have effective interventions which are supporting their improved progress.
- The vast majority of pupils at key stage 3 are making good progress towards their challenging targets. Disadvantaged pupils and those with SEN and/or disabilities are making better progress than previously.
- Over time, pupils with low prior attainment have made progress in line with their peers nationally with similar starting points. There was a marked improvement in these pupils' progress in mathematics and English in 2017. Current pupils with low prior attainment are making similarly strong progress.
- Around one third of pupils take a GCSE course in language. These pupils' progress, including that for disadvantaged pupils, was exceptional in 2016 and 2017.
- There is no officially published data on where pupils go after Year 11 at Lyndon School. The school's internal records show that the percentage of pupils who do not go on to employment, education or training is below the national average. The vast majority of pupils go on to local colleges.

School details

Unique reference number	142075
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	10048374

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 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1184
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Beamish
Principal	Abid Butt
Telephone number	01217 433 402
Website	www.lyndon.org.uk
Email address	office@lyndon.solihull.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Lyndon School became a sponsored academy in 2015. It is part of the Ninestiles Academy Trust.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium is above the national average, as is the percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disability with a statement of SEN or an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- A small number of pupils are educated in alternative provision at Solihull College, K2 Learning and the East Birmingham Network Academy.
- In 2017, the school did not meet the floor standard, the government's minimum expectations for pupils' progress at key stage 4.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the principal, chief executive officer of the trust, other senior leaders and governors. They also met with newly qualified teachers, a panel of staff and a group of subject leaders.
- The views of parents were considered through the 153 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 26 free-text responses. The views of staff were evaluated through the 97 responses to an online questionnaire.
- Inspectors visited parts of lessons, scrutinised pupils' work and spoke with pupils about their experiences of school. They also considered the 36 responses to an online pupil questionnaire.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including that relating to safeguarding, school policies, progress tracking information, external school reviews and performance management.

Inspection team

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Jane Spilsbury	Her Majesty's Inspector
Graeme Rudland	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Lockett	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Bassett	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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