

# Lever Park School

Stocks Park Drive, Horwich, Bolton, Lancashire BL6 6DE

## Inspection dates

24–25 April 2019

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Senior leaders, governors and trustees share a vision for the school. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have worked together successfully to raise standards across the school.
- Almost all pupils now attend school on time every day. Any unexplained absence is followed up assiduously by the school.
- Pupils' behaviour around school is generally calm and orderly. Staff are swift to resolve any emerging issues so that lessons proceed without interruption. The number of fixed-term exclusions has reduced dramatically.
- Current pupils make good progress across the school from their different starting points. A higher proportion of pupils are achieving their academic targets now. By the end of Year 11, almost all pupils gain a range of qualifications, including English and mathematics.
- Leaders have not ensured that the key stage 3 curriculum provides pupils with the essential knowledge which prepares them well for the rigours of key stage 4.
- Middle leaders do not take enough responsibility for improving the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff vigilance, up-to-date training and robust recording and reporting make sure that pupils are well cared for and safe.
- Leaders make effective use of additional funding. The comprehensive enrichment programme enhances the school's curriculum offer. This helps disadvantaged pupils, in particular, to overcome some of their barriers to learning. Staff make good use of the information in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans to plan lessons.
- Over the past three years, all Year 11 pupils have moved on successfully to education, employment or training.
- The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Pupils learn to be tolerant and respectful towards other people.
- The quality of teaching across the school has improved since the school opened. Leaders have put in place suitable training and support to help teaching staff do their jobs well.
- Support staff have played a key role in securing the improvements to pupils' attendance and behaviour. However, pupils are overly reliant on adults to motivate them to complete the work set and to regulate their behaviour in the classrooms and around school.

## **Full report**

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

- Further improve pupils' outcomes by developing more detailed plans for the key stage 3 curriculum which set out clearly the essential knowledge that leaders want pupils to acquire.
- Develop the roles and responsibilities of middle leaders so that they have a greater impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects across the school.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to take greater responsibility for their own learning and behaviour.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher, ably supported by his senior leaders, has transformed Lever Park School. This is now a successful school which staff, pupils, parents and carers are proud to be a part of.
- Leaders, governors and trustees share an aspirational vision for their school. They have an accurate view of the school's historical weaknesses. Together, they have systematically resolved the most pressing of these issues, including attendance and behaviour. As a result, this is now a warm welcoming school where staff, pupils and parents feel valued and pupils achieve well.
- Staff morale is good. Staff are supported well by the senior leadership team. They benefit from the wealth of training they have received to help them do their jobs well. They share the ambitious vision of leaders for Lever Park School. Effective arrangements to manage teachers' performance mean that staff know what is expected of them.
- Leaders make good use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. They have put in place a comprehensive enrichment programme across the school. This well-planned programme ensures that pupils participate in a range of activities, including cultural, arts and life skills. These activities increase pupils' general knowledge, prepare them well for independent living and develop their personal and social skills.
- The school promotes British values through a wealth of activities throughout the school year. For example, pupils visited a local magistrates' court. Pupils keep up to date with national and international events, including the recent bombing in Sri Lanka. They can confidently share their opinions on current government policies, including Brexit.
- Since his appointment, the headteacher, together with his senior leaders, has worked tirelessly to raise standards. The senior leadership team has raised the quality of teaching and learning across the school. However, subject leaders do not play a significant role in improving the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.
- The school makes sure that it diligently fulfils all its statutory duties with regard to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils' EHC plans inform teachers' lesson planning. Targets are set for each pupil based on the objectives set out in their plan. Leaders closely track pupils' progress in relation to these targets. Where staff identify any further needs, the school ensures that specialist advice and guidance are sought and acted on. Additional funding for pupils with SEND is used effectively to help these pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Leaders promote this consistently through the school's enrichment programme. There are planned opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the potential consequences of their actions, as well as to gain confidence in coping with unfamiliar situations.
- Leaders are continually refining and improving the school's curriculum. Leaders have developed the curriculum to meet more closely the needs of the current cohort. Considerable thought has been given to the flexibility of options to accommodate the different needs of pupils at key stage 4. Consequently, this group achieves better

outcomes now. However, at key stage 3, leaders have not given sufficient thought to incorporating the essential knowledge pupils will need to stand them in good stead for key stage 4 and post-16. For example, older pupils lacked some of the key historical knowledge required to help them fully understand the plot when they were studying 'Macbeth'.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors are highly knowledgeable about the school. They make good use of the information leaders provide them, discussions with staff and visits to school. They use this wealth of information to support and challenge school leaders appropriately.
- Governors keep a close eye on pupils' performance, including evaluating the impact of additional funding. They make sure that leaders are held to account for any decline in the school's performance.
- The detailed scheme of delegation means that trustees and governors are clear about their specific roles and responsibilities. Annual audits of skills help governors identify any gaps in their knowledge and expertise so that they can take appropriate actions to redress the balance. Consequently, they have a range of suitable skills, expertise and experience.
- Governors have not shied away from challenging conversations. They are determined to eliminate underperformance so that pupils achieve the best possible outcomes. They have supported senior leaders effectively during testing times.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School leaders have ensured that appropriate pre-employment checks are carried out to ensure that all adults are suitable to work with children. Staff have frequent training so that they understand their roles and responsibilities thoroughly. Any concerns are recorded meticulously and followed up assiduously. Pastoral staff work closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families receive appropriate advice and support.
- Pupils are taught about the risks of knife crime, child sexual exploitation and social media as part of the curriculum. Pupils who spoke to inspectors felt confident that they would talk to adults in school about any worries they may have. Pupils were adamant that there is no bullying at the school. They are confident that staff would resolve any incidents if they occurred. Leaders ensure that there are comprehensive monitoring and filtering systems in place to keep pupils safe online in school.
- Pupils, staff and parents agree that pupils are well cared for and safe in school.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Leaders have put in place comprehensive training and support to improve the quality of teaching across the school. Whole-staff training, one-to-one support and visits to other schools have helped teaching staff to carry out their roles more effectively.

- Since the school opened, the quality of teaching in mathematics has improved considerably. Teachers' secure subject knowledge helps them make good use of time, give clear explanations and provide pupils with helpful advice to improve their work. Pupils enjoy learning and try hard to complete their work.
- Pupils enjoy most of their lessons. In particular, they flourish in art, vocational subjects and design and technology. They make good progress because of activities that engage their interest. For a number of pupils, their enjoyment of these subjects means that they continue to study them post-16.
- Teachers make good use of detailed assessment information when pupils join the school to help them plan appropriate programmes of work. Suitable individual targets are set which help pupils, teachers and leaders track pupils' progress from their different starting points. Staff are quick to spot any issues and put in place additional support as required to help pupils catch up their learning lost prior to joining the school.
- Parents are delighted by their children's success. Those parents who spoke to inspectors had often given up hope of their children gaining academic qualifications prior to joining this school. Leaders make sure that parents receive frequent updates about how well their children are getting on. Parents value the regular telephone calls and face-to-face meetings to talk about their child's academic progress and personal development. Staff also provide useful termly and annual summative written reports.
- Support staff focus their attention predominantly on ensuring that pupils behave well during lessons so that learning is not interrupted. Pupils value highly the times when support staff help them with their learning, for example reframing a question. Unfortunately, when support staff do teach pupils, they limit pupils' learning by doing too much of the pupils' work themselves. This restricts pupils' confidence in taking responsibility for their own learning.
- Teachers follow the school's policy for marking and feedback. When pupils are given the time to respond to it, they find their teachers' advice helpful. However, sometimes, teachers' feedback lacks sufficient subject-specific information about what pupils need to do to improve. Consequently, this feedback does not make a notable contribution to pupils' progress.
- Teachers encourage pupils to talk about their activities. Most pupils are willing to share their ideas with the class. Their classmates generally listen attentively and are respectful of their contributions. Consequently, lessons are lively and engaging.
- Pupils are keen to please their teachers, listen attentively and generally work hard in class. However, pupils are not intrinsically motivated to seek out new information to further develop, deepen and consolidate their knowledge. Moreover, some teachers shy away from highlighting pupils' mistakes and encouraging pupils to improve their work. This means that pupils do not build up enough resilience in their work and commit to improve.

**Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The school places great importance on the development of pupils' personal and social skills.
- Pupils contribute well to their local community. Pupils help to make up food parcels for local homeless people, sell poppies and pack bags in the local supermarkets to support local and national charities.
- All pupils are taught the basic skills required to run a home, including making a bed, ironing and setting a table. This stands pupils in good stead for when they move on to independent living, particularly those children looked after when they leave care.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves healthy. All pupils are encouraged to take part in physical activities at break and lunchtimes, such as football and basketball. Pupils across school take part in swimming lessons, try their hand at skiing and learn to paddleboard. Pupils complete courses in first aid and food hygiene. All pupils learn about potential risks when using social media. Older pupils learn about sexual health and safe sex. Pupils enjoy their food technology lessons, learning how to prepare a range of tasty dishes.
- As part of the school's enrichment programme, pupils learn about some of the major world faiths. They visit the local Jewish museum, Anglican cathedral and Buddhist temple, where they find out about these religions. This helps the pupils to have a better understanding of different beliefs and traditions, promoting more tolerant attitudes to others.
- Teachers plan a range of activities which provide opportunities for pupils to interact with different members of the community. Teachers use trips to local places of historical interest, travel by public transport and visits to the theatre to teach pupils how to interact appropriately with members of the public. Pupils increase their levels of confidence so that they can buy tickets, ask for directions and talk to unfamiliar adults.
- Older pupils can apply for positions of responsibility within school. Those pupils who applied to be head boy and prefects wrote expressions of interest, filled in application forms and took part in a formal interview with the headteacher. The successful candidates are proud of their roles and carry out their responsibilities dutifully.
- Staff provide sensitive support for pupils so that they are successful in school. However, staff do not give pupils enough opportunities to develop self-motivation, self-regulation and independent learning skills. Consequently, pupils are highly reliant on staff to motivate them to complete work and regulate their behaviour.
- Leaders ensure that rigorous checks are carried out to reassure themselves of the quality of provision, including safeguarding, for pupils who attend alternative provision. Leaders closely monitor pupils' behaviour, attendance and academic progress during their time at the alternative provider.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Excellent relationships in this school are underpinned by respect, positive regard and warmth. Pupils like and respect the adults who work with them. Pupils are pleasant and polite towards staff, visitors and each other.
- Pupils' behaviour has significantly improved since the school opened. The current leadership team has taken effective action to establish a calm and orderly environment. Pupils behave well both in lessons and around school. The number of days lost to exclusion has reduced dramatically. Staff are adept at identifying and addressing any potential issues. Any inappropriate behaviour is swiftly and appropriately dealt with so that lessons proceed without interruption. Moreover, some older pupils actively encourage their peers to make positive behaviour choices.
- Improvements in the quality of teaching, positive staff-pupil relationships and clear expectations have all contributed to significant improvements in pupils' behaviour. Leaders monitor pupils' behaviour systematically across the week. Leaders use this information to identify any emerging patterns and trends. Swift and decisive actions are put in place to resolve any emerging issues. Every pupil has suitable targets to improve their behaviour from their different starting points.
- Leaders' systematic approach to improving attendance has paid dividends. Pupils' attendance has improved considerably since the school opened. Pupils' attendance is now well over 90%. The vast majority of pupils are in school on time every day. As with behaviour, every pupil has an individual target based on their previous attendance rate. Leaders closely monitor pupils' attendance to ensure that pupils routinely achieve their targets. The pastoral team provides effective support to those families who struggle to get their children to school.
- Leaders have set up a nurture group on-site and an off-site provision for its most vulnerable pupils. The additional specialist support given to these pupils helps them access education matched closely to their individual needs.

### Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Almost all pupils who join this school have a history of educational failure. Most have a record of poor school attendance, exclusions and academic underperformance. Prior to starting at the school, many pupils lack motivation and have low aspirations.
- From their low starting points, almost all pupils make good progress across the curriculum, achieve academic qualifications and move on successfully to suitable post-16 destinations. Improvements in pupils' attendance and behaviour, together with effective teaching, mean that pupils achieve well from their different starting points.
- By the end of Year 11, the overwhelming majority of pupils gain a range of qualifications and accreditation, including in English and mathematics.
- Current pupils achieve well in mathematics. Despite considerable gaps in their learning prior to joining the school, all pupils gain a functional skills qualification and most pupils gain a GCSE qualification.
- Many of the pupils were reluctant readers before they joined the school. Leaders have launched a programme to promote reading to the pupils. They have challenged every

pupil to read 100 books before they leave Lever Park. During the inspection, pupils enjoyed finding out about the author Charles Dickens and recounting the plot of 'Macbeth'. The school timetable includes time for pupils to read to themselves or an adult. This focus on reading, coupled with a range of activities to develop pupils' writing, means that most pupils make substantial progress in English. Consequently, most pupils gain a functional skills qualification and a GCSE pass.

- Pupils also achieve well in other subjects. The vast majority of pupils who study art and design and technology gain GCSE qualifications in these subjects. Also, pupils achieve awards, certificates and diplomas in motor vehicle and horticulture vocational qualifications. Furthermore, pupils achieve certificates in first aid and food hygiene.
- Despite their low starting points and considerable gaps in their learning, current pupils make good progress in subjects across the curriculum. This helps them to make up some of the learning lost due to their previous poor attendance and behaviour.
- Over the last three years, all pupils have moved on to education, employment or training at the end of Year 11. Comprehensive careers advice and guidance, work experience and travel training help pupils prepare for their next steps.



## School details

Unique reference number	142766
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10087789

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	76
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mary Powell
Academy lead	Matthew Taylor
Telephone number	01204 332 666
Website	<a href="http://www.boltonimpacttrust.org.uk">www.boltonimpacttrust.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@leverpark.bolton.sch.uk">office@leverpark.bolton.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Lever Park School has one main site. In addition, a small group of pupils are taught in separate premises.
- The school caters for key stage 3 and 4 pupils with SEND. All the pupils have EHC plans. All the pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Currently, most pupils that attend the school are placed by Bolton local authority.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average. A number of pupils are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils are boys.
- Lever Park School currently uses one alternative provider, Heartlift.
- The school opened in May 2016. It is one of the five schools and alternative provisions that form a multi-academy trust. The executive principal of Bolton Impact Trust

oversees the five establishments. The school is governed by a local governing body which reports to the board of trustees.

- The academy lead was appointed in September 2017.
- The predecessor school was judged to require improvement at its most recent inspection in March 2016.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted with one day's notice to the school.
- The inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school. The inspectors checked work in a range of pupils' books.
- The inspectors held meetings with leaders, governors, trustees, teachers and other adults working in the school. The inspector held a telephone conversation with an officer of the local authority who has placed children in the school.
- An inspector spoke with an independent educational consultant who works with the school.
- The inspectors scrutinised an extensive range of school documentation, including: policies; planning; documentation relating to the leadership and management of the school; and information about the progress, behaviour and attendance of pupils in the school. They scrutinised the school's records and systems to check the suitability of adults to work in the school.
- The inspectors spoke formally with pupils, as well as informally during the school day, and observed them during breaktimes.
- There were two responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. An inspector spoke to a number of parents during the inspection.
- The inspectors considered the 21 written responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- An inspector visited the premises of an off-site provision run by the school for its most vulnerable pupils.

## Inspection team

Pippa Jackson Maitland, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kathryn Parkinson

Ofsted Inspector

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