

Leeds East Academy

South Parkway, Seacroft, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS14 6TY

Inspection dates

24–25 April 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal, supported by the trust, has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. The large majority of pupils and staff are very positive about the school's trajectory of improvement.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, with strong systems in place for checking how well pupils are doing. The wider curriculum provides pupils with a range of opportunities to develop as young citizens.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is strong. Teachers know their pupils well and set work which challenges them at the right level.
- Leaders have put in place an effective programme for pupils' personal development and welfare. Pupils talk enthusiastically about how the school keeps them safe and prepares them for life after school. The very large majority of pupils describe a tolerant school which respects diversity.
- Pupils' behaviour during the inspection was very good, with high standards of conduct in lessons and around the school. The very large majority of staff and all pupils who spoke to inspectors agree that behaviour is improving.
- Leaders have taken effective action to improve rates of attendance and reduce rates of persistent absence.
- Overall, pupils' progress was in line with the national average at the end of key stage 4 in 2017/18. Pupils currently in the school are making strong progress across a range of subjects and years, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged.
- While behaviour is good overall, at times, a minority of pupils' behaviour is not of the same high standard.
- Although rates of attendance have improved over time, the rates of attendance of some pupils are below where they need to be.
- At times, some of the least-able boys make less progress than their peers and girls.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the rates of attendance and reduce the rates of persistent absence of those pupils who have arrived in the school during the year, by continuing to work closely with them and their families.
- Build on the improving standard of most pupils' behaviour and further establish the consistently good standard of pupils' behaviour by:
 - eliminating the pockets of poorer behaviour by a minority of pupils
 - ensuring that all staff follow the school's behaviour management policy with consistency across the school
 - eliminating the occasional name calling, particularly that which is directed at pupils with SEND.
- Further improve pupils' outcomes by ensuring that all groups of pupils, especially the least able boys, make stronger progress by:
 - ensuring that teachers set work that engages the least able boys in their learning
 - making sure that boys complete all of their work to an acceptable standard and with an appropriate quality of presentation.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders' aspirations for the school are high. They are determined that all of their pupils, regardless of background, will achieve as highly as possible. Leaders have created an ambitious and optimistic culture across the school, with the very large majority of staff proud to work there. Pupils from all starting points are making strong progress as a result.
- Leaders have taken action to ensure that the staff share leaders' high expectations. There is a palpable sense of togetherness among staff. Morale is high. All of the staff and pupils who spoke to inspectors said that the school is improving quickly. To a very large degree, leaders have built the foundations of such confidence on the basis of bespoke, good quality professional training. Teachers at different career points, including those who are newly and recently qualified and those with middle leadership responsibilities, feel well supported and challenged by the training which has been provided for them. As a consequence of effective training, the quality of teaching is good and improving.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. For instance, leaders have ensured that pupils have sufficient opportunities to discuss and consider many of the issues in the news which affect them as citizens. Pupils told inspectors, for example, about the form-time discussions they have had about recent terrorist atrocities, with a clear understanding of the differences between 'free speech' and 'hate speech'. Pupils' awareness and understanding of British values, particularly for tolerance, are strong.
- Leaders make effective use of additional funding for SEND, the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding. Pupils with SEND, for example, were positive in their discussions with inspectors about the range of supportive actions leaders have taken to help them, such as the 'sun room' and the use of different therapies, such as music. Leaders have also supported the least skilled readers who join the school in Year 7, so that their reading ability improves quickly. Leaders' use of pupil premium funding includes effective support for pupils who join the school from other countries, often with little or no English.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced and is planned with pupils' best interests at its heart. Action has been taken by leaders to improve the quality of how they monitor the progress pupils make across the curriculum. For example, they have built close links with a successful neighbouring multi-academy trust, which has enabled leaders to monitor and refine their systems for checking how well pupils are performing.
- Leaders are further growing the extra-curricular opportunities for pupils. There has been a concerted effort to provide pupils with opportunities for taking on additional responsibilities around the school. Pupils spoke with great enthusiasm, for example, about the various strands of the student leadership programme such as transformation leaders, visitor welcomers and head of department responsibility for areas such as welfare, health and business/finance. Pupils could describe the difference they were making through these roles and the changes they have helped to bring about, such as recycling at school and the introduction of professional counsellors to support pupils

with mental well-being.

- Leaders have arranged formal support with another multi-academy trust to assist them in the development of subject leaders. As a result of this support, subject leadership is secure and on an upwards trajectory. Subject leaders are knowledgeable and convincing in their understanding of how to improve pupils' progress. The strength of pupils' progress across a range of subjects, including where it has been less strong historically, is testament to the effectiveness of the support.

Governance of the school

- The trustees and the members of the local accountability board have a clear-sighted view of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. Governors share and reinforce leaders' high aspirations for the pupils who attend the school.
- Governors have acted decisively since the previous inspection to improve the standard of effectiveness in holding leaders to account. For example, they have taken steps to open themselves up to external scrutiny through the appointment of an improvement partner. Checks and balances are built in to this process, so that the improvement partner retains a critical and unbiased perspective of leaders' actions and effectiveness and to prevent it becoming a cosy relationship.
- Evidence seen in the minutes of trust meetings and local accountability board meetings confirms that, as a consequence of the external scrutiny, governors are precise and focused in their challenge towards leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have established a strong culture of vigilance. Staff are trained in the necessary areas, with regular updates. Staff have an effective understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. Leaders ensure that the necessary checks on adults who work in the school are carried out in line with statutory requirements.
- Leaders with particular responsibility for safeguarding are assiduous in carrying out their duties. They liaise effectively with professionals in other agencies, such as children's services at the local authority. They act with alacrity to safeguard pupils, such as by making checks when children who are subject to child protection plans are absent from the school.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in the school. They said that there are no 'no-go' areas in the school. All of the pupils who spoke to inspectors confirmed that they feel well supported and, should they be worried about anything, would be confident that a trusted adult would sort it out for them.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Across a range of subjects and years, teachers make effective use of planning, so that pupils make strong progress from their starting points. Teachers have a deep knowledge of pupils' needs and plan lessons effectively to meet these needs, including of those with SEND, those who are disadvantaged and the most able.

- Consistently, teachers have high expectations of what pupils should achieve. It is typical, for example, to see teachers setting challenging work for pupils of different abilities. Teachers underpin such challenging expectations with regular checks on how well pupils have understood the learning. Often, pupils themselves ask teachers to clarify important points because they want to do well.
- Typically, teachers make very effective use of questions to push pupils further and to check that they have understood the point. Often, teachers' questions include the use of demanding subject-specific terminology, because they require pupils to understand such terms. This is closely aligned to teachers' focus on the knowledge pupils require to be successful in examinations.
- In different subjects, it is typical to see pupils becoming more independent in their learning as the year progresses, as they successfully acquire new knowledge, skills and understanding. For example, in a range of subjects and years, pupils become more confident writers as the result of good teaching. Also, as a result of effective teaching, pupils are increasingly confident speakers. They talk with assurance to each other and to their teachers, exploring with engagement the topic in hand.
- To a large extent, teachers' attention to pupils' continual improvement has resulted in pupils' growing ability to retain important learning from one lesson to the next. Teachers make effective use of leaders' policy of 'red zone' work to push pupils in securely grasping new knowledge or skills. For the most able pupils, teachers are making effective use of what the school calls 'the red hot challenge' in helping pupils to grasp and retain challenging new information.
- While the effectiveness of teaching overall is good, occasionally there is some inconsistency. For instance, at times, the quality of some of the least able boys' work is not as good as that of middle- and higher-attaining boys and girls, with a greater incidence of incomplete or less tidy work.
- Pupils recognise the improved and improving quality of teaching. They are aware that, until recently, there has been some turbulence in staffing with some resultant inconsistency in quality. Now, however, pupils are more confident in the quality of teaching. As one pupil said, 'These teachers don't give up on you easily.'

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The majority of pupils have a strong understanding of how to be successful in their learning. It is common to see pupils eager to learn from their mistakes, because of the heightened expectations from staff. Pupils know their targets and they know what they need to do to get better marks. Typically, pupils take pride in their work.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that the school supports them in their physical and emotional well-being. They said that, partly as a result of the actions of student leaders, school catering is now more focused on healthy eating. Leaders have helped student leaders to bring outside speakers, such as American football teams, into the school to talk to pupils about the benefits of being fit and active. Pupils told inspectors

about support for their mental health, such as through 'The Beck' resource. Pupils also spoke positively to inspectors about the role of their form tutors in helping and supporting them on a day-to-day basis.

- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe. Leaders have ensured, for example, that pupils know about e-safety and the risks of different kinds of radicalisation and extremism. Virtually all of the pupils who spoke to inspectors said that bullying is not a problem in the school but that, when it happens, it would be dealt with effectively. Pupils told inspectors that the recently appointed principal has made anti-bullying a priority, such as through the improved ways to notify staff of any potential bullying concerns. Leaders monitor the instances of bullying so that they can identify any patterns or trends of different types of bullying and take the necessary action. A few parents and carers, however, do not think that the school deals effectively with bullying.
- The very large majority of pupils who spoke to inspectors said that the school is a tolerant community. They described a school in which young people can be themselves and that other pupils are tolerant and inclusive of any differences, including of gender, sexuality and ethnicity. A small number of pupils with SEND told inspectors that, occasionally, they are subject to name-calling by other pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- During the inspection, pupils' behaviour was impeccable. To a large extent, this is founded on the mutually respectful relationships which have been established between staff and pupils. All of the pupils and staff who spoke to inspectors said that behaviour has improved since the previous inspection.
- The rate of pupils who are excluded for a fixed period has fallen substantially over time, from worryingly high levels in 2016/17 to the national average for similar schools in 2017/18. Following the revision of the behaviour policy during this academic year and the arrival of a large number of additional pupils from other schools, the rate of exclusion increased for a period of time. However, it has fallen substantially over the last term as the new system and pupils become settled.
- While the observed behaviour of pupils was very strong, pupils told inspectors that, sometimes, pupils' behaviour is not as consistently good. A minority of staff shared this view. Pupils believe that the behaviour of a minority of pupils is less good when teachers do not follow the school's behaviour policy consistently.
- Leaders' actions to improve rates of pupils' attendance and reduce levels of persistent absence led to improvements by the end of 2017/18, so that attendance rates and persistent absence rates were in line with the national averages. Leaders have taken effective steps to improve the attendance of pupils with SEND, with encouraging signs from a pilot attendance project. During the current academic year, rates of attendance have declined compared with the same time last year. However, this is because the school has received a substantial number of additional pupils in-year, a large proportion of whom have challenging levels of attendance. Leaders are working closely with this group of pupils to bring about improved attendance.
- Leaders make use of several providers of alternative education. They carefully and

regularly monitor how well pupils are doing in such provision. This includes regular communication with, and visits to, the alternative provision. Typically, pupils' education plans are reviewed every six weeks or so, including daily attendance checks and regular progress reviews. As a result of leaders' supervision of the programmes being followed, pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare needs are appropriately met.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Across a range of subjects and years, current pupils are making strong progress from their starting points. They make such progress, because teachers know their pupils well and ensure that work is appropriately pitched.
- Current pupils' progress is particularly strong in subjects where progress has been weak in recent years compared to national averages. For example, very effective teaching in English, history, geography and science is leading to pupils making good progress in those subjects.
- Progress is similarly strong in other subjects and key stages, such as mathematics. Additionally, over time, pupils have made progress which is above the national average at the end of key stage 4 in the 'options' range of subjects, such as physical education, art, the technology subjects and health and social care. Inspection evidence indicates that current pupils' progress in these subjects continues to be good.
- Pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged make good gains in their learning. Over time, their progress is improving towards that of other pupils with the same starting points. Similarly, the current most able pupils are making strong progress across the curriculum. To a large extent, this is due to the high expectations of teachers and their setting of suitably challenging tasks.
- Leaders have taken effective action to support pupils who enter the school with lower-than-average reading ability. A culture of reading is promoted in the school, especially for those who need the extra help the most. Pupils who join the school speaking English as an additional language are well supported in quickly acquiring the ability to read, speak and write English.
- An effective careers education, information, advice and guidance process has substantially improved the preparedness of pupils for their next steps beyond Year 11. From a concerning low and below national average figure just two years ago, the proportion of pupils who progress to a suitable next step was above the national average in 2017/18.

School details

Unique reference number	136826
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10094091

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	871
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Professor Darren Shickle
Principal	Sarah Carrie
Telephone number	0113 273 1964
Website	http://www.leedseastacademy.org.uk/
Email address	info@leedseastacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 May 2017

Information about this school

- The school joined the White Rose Academies Trust in September 2014. Governance responsibility rests with the trust board, with some delegated authority passed to the local accountability board.
- The principal was appointed in April 2018. Two senior vice-principals have been appointed recently, one in December 2018 and one in January 2019.
- The majority of pupils are of White-British heritage. A small proportion of pupils are of White-Romany heritage. Smaller proportions of pupils are from a variety of ethnic backgrounds.
- A higher-than-national-average proportion of pupils are disadvantaged. A higher-than-national-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school has a formal agreement for support in place with the GORSE multi-academy trust. This support is to provide development and training for aspects of middle

leadership.

- The school has links with several providers of alternative education: Southway; MAP; The Steven Longfellow Academy; Involve; Oil; Pivot Academy; Leeds City College; and Aspire and Achieve.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a broad range of lessons across subjects and key stages, sometimes accompanied by senior leaders. During these visits, inspectors talked to pupils and looked in their books.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work across several subjects, with different year groups and pupil abilities represented.
- Meetings were held with the principal and senior leaders. An inspector met with the executive principal of the trust. A meeting was held with members of the board of trustees and the local accountability board.
- Inspectors met senior leaders with responsibility for: attendance; behaviour; SEND; the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; pupils' outcomes; careers education, information advice and guidance; the pupil premium and Year 7 catch up funding; the curriculum; alternative education provision; and safeguarding.
- Meetings were held with four groups of pupils, drawn from across year groups and including pupils with SEND. Inspectors also spoke informally with pupils around the site at breaktime, lunchtime and the end of the school day.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, on corridors, in social spaces such as the dining room, and at the end of the day when pupils were leaving the school site.
- Inspectors visited the school's internal bases for supporting pupils who have not adhered to the school's behaviour policy.
- An inspector listened to some pupils in Years 7 and 8 read.
- An inspector spoke on the telephone to one of the providers of alternative education used by the school.
- A wide range of documentation was examined. This includes: leaders' self-evaluation and plans; minutes of the trust board and the local accountability board meetings; attendance, behaviour and exclusion information; bullying logs; and pupils' progress information. Leaders' processes for vetting adults' suitability to work in the school were checked, along with a sample of safeguarding files. Inspectors scrutinised external reports about the school's performance, including the local authority's safeguarding audit. An inspector considered leaders' records of actions following instances of tension at the school and in the local community.
- Consideration was given to the 33 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, together with 30 free-text responses. The 73 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Steve Shaw, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Louise Greatrex	Ofsted Inspector
Julian Appleyard	Ofsted Inspector
Garry Stout	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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