

Leeds West Academy

Intake Lane, Rodley, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS13 1DQ

Inspection dates

14–15 May 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
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- There has been a significant improvement in the quality of education since the school was last inspected. The principal and senior leaders have tackled the areas for improvement inspectors identified with energy and resolve.
- Senior leaders have an accurate picture of all aspects of the school's performance. Action plans provide a strong starting point for securing further improvement in the quality of education at Leeds West Academy.
- Middle leaders are increasingly effective. In some subjects, middle leaders have radically redesigned the curriculum and there has been rapid improvement in the quality of teaching. However, some have less experience or have been appointed to their role more recently.
- Governors and the multi-academy trust make a strong and influential contribution to the school's leadership and management. They provide highly effective support and challenge for the principal and senior leaders.
- Additional funding is used well to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and those in Year 7 who need help to catch up in English and mathematics. Although disadvantaged pupils are making stronger progress in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics, some do not do as well as other pupils nationally who have similar starting points.
- The quality of teaching has improved and is now good. Teachers receive high-quality training to improve their knowledge, skills and practice. Occasionally, pupils' learning is interrupted by low-level disruptive behaviour. This is because, at times, the work set for pupils with lower starting points is not matched closely to their interests and abilities.
- Historically, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) did not achieve the best possible outcomes. Importantly, the needs of current pupils with SEND are identified and assessed accurately and the special educational provision made for them is improving strongly.
- Pupils work hard and conduct themselves well. Typically, they behave in a polite and respectful way. The number of incidents of challenging or disruptive behaviour has decreased significantly as a result of the school's effective work. The use of fixed-term exclusion has also decreased.
- There has been substantial improvement in attendance since the last inspection. Although improving, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND remains below the average for other pupils nationally.
- The quality of 16 to 19 study programmes is now good. There is a strong upward trend in the outcomes achieved by Year 13 students.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the curriculum and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that:
 - disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND make consistently strong progress and achieve the best possible outcomes
 - the work set for pupils who have lower starting points is closely matched to their interests and abilities and supports their personal development and behaviour consistently well.
- Further strengthen leadership and management by increasing the contribution middle leaders make to improving the curriculum and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Further improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - increasing attendance to at least the average for secondary schools nationally
 - increasing the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal, senior and middle leaders have tackled the weaknesses identified at the school's last inspection in a highly principled and purposeful way. They have secured the strong support of staff, who share their ambitious vision and inclusive values. As a result, the quality of education provided by Leeds West Academy has improved rapidly and is now good.
- Senior leaders have an incisive understanding of the school's effectiveness. Checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning and progress give senior leaders a clear and accurate picture of the strengths and areas for development in these important areas. Importantly, the school's improvement plans are sharply focused on the areas for development senior leaders have identified. The impact of the actions in these plans on the outcomes pupils are achieving is demonstrably evident.
- Middle leaders make an increasingly strong contribution to improving the quality of education. Many have led significant change which has resulted in rapid improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' learning and progress. Those who are less experienced or new to their middle leadership roles are developing their knowledge and skills quickly as a result of the effective training and support they receive.
- The curriculum supports pupils' academic learning in a wide range of subjects as well as their personal development, behaviour and welfare. Pupils' understanding of British values is promoted strongly through a carefully planned citizenship programme. The curriculum contributes well to important aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' learning in visual and performing arts subjects makes an especially strong contribution to their cultural knowledge and understanding.
- Pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding are used well to improve the outcomes achieved by disadvantaged pupils and those who need additional help in English and mathematics. The school's well-thought-out pupil premium strategy identifies precisely how improvement in the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils will be secured. Assessment information and work in books show that the attainment of disadvantaged pupils has improved strongly. This is especially the case for the most able disadvantaged pupils. Similarly, Year 7 pupils who need help to catch up in literacy and mathematics make strong gains as a result of a wide range of highly effective interventions. Importantly, however, some disadvantaged pupils do not achieve the same outcomes as other pupils who have similar starting points nationally.
- Teachers value the high-quality training and support they receive from the school and multi-academy trust. Many told inspectors that their practice has improved significantly as a result of the school's structured and systematic approach to supporting their professional learning and development. Newly qualified teachers spoke enthusiastically to inspectors about their early career development. Crucially, the school's successful approach to improving teachers' knowledge, skills and practice has had a marked impact on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the outcomes pupils are achieving.
- Pupils' learning and progress are assessed systematically and well. Assessment is thoughtfully integrated into curriculum planning and information about how well pupils

are doing is used by senior and middle leaders to identify individual pupils and groups of pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Prompt action is taken to get them back on track when concerns have been identified.

- The school's arrangements for identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of pupils with SEND are working increasingly well. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) knows pupils with SEND well and has strong oversight of how effectively their needs are being met. Individual programmes and personalised support, including the support provided by the school's nurture provision, make a marked difference to pupils' learning and development and their social and emotional health and well-being.
- Senior leaders are working hard to increase the involvement of parents and carers in their children's education. Comments on Parent View indicate that many families are confident that the school is 'going places' and can see that there has been huge improvement in the school's leadership and management and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. However, several parents expressed concerns about how well the school follows up incidents of bullying and the management of pupils' behaviour on Parent View.

Governance of the school

- The local accountability board and the multi-academy trust contribute strongly to the school's leadership and management.
- Governors are ambitious for pupils, the school and the community served by Leeds West Academy. They have a detailed knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement because they receive high-quality reports from the principal, senior leaders and the academy improvement partner. Governors provide an exceptional level of support and challenge through a wide range of activities which include frequent visits to see the school at work, detailed scrutiny of performance information and good dialogue with senior leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong and embedded culture of identifying and supporting pupils who need help and protection. Senior leaders make sure adults are knowledgeable about the things that make pupils vulnerable and records show that concerns are identified and acted upon quickly and effectively. The school's work is well supported by a range of professionals based in the local multi-disciplinary team. Senior leaders and governors have strong oversight of the school's safeguarding arrangements. As a result, important safeguarding systems, such as checks on the suitability of adults to work in the school, are strong.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved significantly since the school's last inspection. Weaknesses in the leadership of teaching and teachers' practice have been tackled with a relentless focus on securing rapid improvement in pupils' learning and progress in all subjects.

- Typically, lessons are carefully planned and learning activities closely match pupils' different needs and starting points. High expectations and strong routines contribute well to pupils' personal development and behaviour. The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are set challenging work which develops and deepens their ideas and understanding. In English, history and geography, for example, the most able pupils are able to write confidently, and at length, in response to challenging questions.
- Assessment is used systematically by teachers to check pupils' knowledge and skills, and to inform their planning and teaching. This effective ongoing use of assessment in lessons contributes significantly to pupils' good learning and progress.
- Teachers have strong subject and curriculum knowledge and they explain and model ideas and concepts clearly. Teachers question pupils skilfully to check their recall and to develop their understanding. They are quick to spot errors and misconceptions or identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. Many pupils respond keenly to questions, showing interest and curiosity in the subject.
- Pupils with SEND are generally well supported by teaching assistants, who understand their needs and how to help them to take the next step in their learning. Occasionally, support plans do not provide the clear guidance teachers and teaching assistants need to help them work out how best to adjust and adapt teaching for some pupils with SEND.
- Similarly, pupils who have lower starting points occasionally find the work they are set in some subjects too difficult. This leads to some low-level disruptive behaviour which, although managed well by teachers, is a barrier to pupils making rapid and sustained progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' personal, social and emotional development is promoted well. Pupils are developing important qualities such as determination, persistence and resilience which, alongside other skills and attributes, are helping them to be successful learners.
- The school's nurture provision makes a distinctive contribution to the personal development and welfare of pupils who have more significant and complex social, emotional or mental health needs. Pupils spoke to inspectors about the transformational difference this provision has made to their well-being and welfare.
- Pupils understand the importance of keeping healthy and know about risks to their safety such as exploitation, extremism and radicalisation and the risks associated with using computers, the internet and social media.
- Pupils told inspectors that they know how to report concerns about bullying and records show that bullying incidents are recorded systematically and followed up well. Actions include the increasingly frequent use of 'restorative conversations' which help pupils to reflect on the consequences of their actions and behaviour and work out how to repair and rebuild damaged relationships. However, some pupils and several parents

are not confident that the school deals with bullying incidents quickly and effectively.

- There has been a significant reduction in the number of pupils placed in alternative provision since the last inspection. Senior leaders have strong oversight of this provision and the positive contribution it makes to pupils' personal development, welfare and wider outcomes. Pupils told inspectors that the alternative provision has helped them to get back on track and be better prepared for the next stage of their education.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Typically, pupils' conduct reflects the school's high expectations and the value given to behaving in a polite and respectful way. Incidents of challenging behaviour have declined significantly. This is because the curriculum and teaching have improved, the school has a more consistent approach to managing behaviour, and there is better support for pupils who have more significant and complex social, emotional and mental health needs. Importantly, the use of fixed-term exclusion has also decreased significantly since the school's last inspection.
- Senior and middle leaders have worked tirelessly to improve attendance and tackle persistent absence. There has been a sustained improvement in attendance since the last inspection as a result of the school's committed and proactive work with pupils and their families. Crucially, however, overall attendance remains stubbornly lower than the national average for secondary schools. Although improving strongly, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND is also lower than the figure for all pupils in secondary schools nationally.
- Pupils' learning and progress are occasionally held back by low-level disruptive behaviour, for example when some pupils are set work which is not well matched to their needs or starting points.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- There has been a substantial improvement in the progress pupils are making and their attainment in a wide range of subjects in Years 7 to 11. This is as a result of significant changes to the curriculum and rapid improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Pupils are making strong progress in English and mathematics from their different starting points. The most able pupils are making good gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding in these key subjects and in other subjects such as history and geography. The outcomes pupils achieve in visual and performing arts subjects are a source of great pride for pupils and reflect the highest level of ambition and aspiration for them.
- The progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils have improved rapidly as a result of the school's effective approach to tackling the barriers this group of pupils experience. The most able disadvantaged pupils have secured the strongest gains in English, mathematics and a wide range of other subjects. The school's nurture provision is making a substantial contribution to the improving outcomes achieved by

disadvantaged pupils who also have more significant and complex social, emotional or mental health needs. However, some disadvantaged pupils do not achieve the best possible outcomes.

- Year 7 pupils who need help to catch up in English and mathematics make rapid progress as a result of the additional support and intervention they receive. This group of Year 7 pupils are developing crucially important skills and improving their reading and spelling accuracy and reading comprehension.
- The progress and attainment of pupils with SEND are improving quickly. Records show that pupils with a wide range of needs and difficulties are making increasingly strong progress towards the targets in their support and education, health and care (EHC) plans. However, some inconsistency in setting clear and measurable curricular targets for this group of pupils as well specifying how they will be helped to achieve these targets is slowing the rate of improvement in their academic outcomes.
- Some pupils who have lower starting points are not making rapid and sustained gains because the work they are set is not building their knowledge, skills and understanding consistently well.
- A high proportion of Year 11 pupils move successfully on to further education, apprenticeships, employment and training. The school's high-quality programme of careers information, advice and guidance has contributed strongly to this excellent outcome for pupils.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Senior leaders are ambitious for sixth-form students. Indeed, following the decision to close the sixth form at the end of 2018/19, they have worked tirelessly to make sure current Year 13 students complete their courses successfully and are well prepared for future education or employment.
- Senior leaders have strong oversight of the quality of 16 to 19 study programmes. The areas for development identified at the school's last inspection have been tackled well. For example, sixth-form attendance has improved significantly and retention rates are now in line with national figures. Importantly, checks on the quality of teaching in the sixth form, and on students' learning and progress, are systematic and effective.
- There has been a sustained trend of improvement in the outcomes achieved by sixth-form students, including those who are disadvantaged. Historically, students have made stronger progress on applied general courses than A-level courses. This is also the case for current Year 13 students.
- Students who start their 16 to 19 study programmes without good GCSE grades in English and/or mathematics receive good support and a high proportion successfully achieve higher GCSE grades in these crucially important subjects.
- Good impartial careers advice helps students to choose suitable sixth-form courses that match their needs and aspirations. Almost all students move successfully on to education, training or employment at the end of Year 13. The proportion moving on to higher education is consistently higher than the national average.
- Students develop their personal, social and employability skills through a well-

structured programme of non-qualification activities, including work experience. These important aspects of students' development are promoted well by sixth-form tutors and subject teachers.

- Students conduct themselves well. They are confident, polite and respectful. Students know how to keep healthy and stay safe. Many spoke to inspectors about how the decision to close the sixth form has affected them. Importantly, however, students also said their concerns had been heard and acted upon and felt that the school had supported them well through their final year at Leeds West Academy.

School details

Unique reference number	135935
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10087557

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

Type of school	Secondary
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	1,259
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	78
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Kate Pearlman-Shaw
Principal	Christian Wilcocks
Telephone number	01132 295 454
Website	www.leedswestacademy.org.uk
Email address	info@leedswestacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 February–1 March 2017

Information about this school

- Leeds West Academy is a larger-than-average-sized secondary school for pupils aged between 11 and 18. Following public consultation in 2017/18, the school's sixth form will close at the end of 2018/19. Currently, there are no students in Year 12.
- The school uses six alternative providers: Leeds City College, West 11, West 14, Oasis, Southway and Core Training and Development.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language.

- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is much higher than that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who need support for SEND is higher than the national average. A lower-than-average proportion of pupils have an EHC plan.
- Leeds West Academy is part of the White Rose Academies Trust. The school's local accountability board includes representatives from the trust board and meets regularly to monitor the school's work and hold the principal and senior leaders to account.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning on both days of the inspection. They also spoke to pupils and sixth-form students and examined the work in their books and folders. Several lessons were visited jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors visited West 11, one of the alternative providers used by the school.
- Meetings were held with pupils and sixth-form students, the principal and executive principal, senior and middle leaders, five newly qualified teachers and four representatives from the local accountability board. There were 157 responses recorded on Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire, including 151 free-text responses. Inspectors considered 106 responses to the online pupil survey and 79 responses to the online staff survey.
- Inspectors examined documents relating to governance, self-evaluation, school improvement planning, pupils’ progress, attendance, behaviour, the curriculum and safeguarding.

Inspection team

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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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