

Leeds City Academy

Bedford Field, Woodhouse Cliff, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS6 2LG

Inspection dates

21–22 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
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

- Exceptional leadership from the highly skilled senior leadership team has improved all aspects of the school since the last inspection. The school's culture is now inclusive and aspirational. Pupils develop the resilience needed to rise to the challenges set by staff. The school has been transformed and its overall effectiveness improved.
- Governance is a noteworthy strength of the school. Governors provide robust challenge and support to leaders and make a significant contribution to the school's continuing improvement.
- Teaching is good. Leaders have effectively addressed previous weaknesses in teaching. As a result, most pupils in the school now make good progress from their starting points across a range of subjects.
- Strong support is in place for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and this helps them to make good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders have taken successful action to improve the progress made by disadvantaged pupils. As a result, the gap in progress made between this group of pupils and other pupils nationally is diminishing.
- Strong relationships between teachers and pupils ensure that most pupils actively use lesson time to reflect on their own learning.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. Pupils conduct themselves very well in lessons and around the school. They are confident, polite and courteous to one another. Most pupils show positive attitudes to learning.
- The curriculum is effective and provides very good opportunities for pupils' academic and personal development. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They develop their strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding through assemblies and within their lessons.
- Leaders have improved pupils' behaviour since the last inspection. Fixed-term exclusions have significantly reduced since the last inspection. However, not all staff apply the positive rewards strategy of the school consistently. The rate of fixed-term exclusions of pupils with SEND, although reduced, remains higher than that of their peers.
- Overall, pupils' attendance has improved and is in line with the national average. However, despite the hard work of leaders and the attendance team, pupils with SEND remain more likely to be absent than their peers.
- A small amount of variability remains in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in some subjects. This leads to an element of unevenness in the progress of some pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the behaviour and attendance of all pupils by:
 - ensuring that all staff apply consistently the school's revised positive behaviour policy, including the use of rewards
 - reducing even further the number of fixed-term exclusions and absence of pupils with SEND.
- Further reduce any remaining variability in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that all teachers consistently plan learning activities that challenge all pupils effectively.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The inspirational and highly skilful senior leadership team has successfully transformed the school to reflect the vision for all pupils to 'aspire together, achieve together'. This is reflected in the school's inclusive culture and ethos, which challenge pupils to aim high and be ambitious. In addition, leaders and staff provide appropriate support to improve confidence and resilience so pupils can achieve their goals. As a result, the overall school effectiveness has improved and there is great capacity for further improvement.
- Leaders have dramatically improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment since the last inspection. They draw continually on effective practice seen not only in school but also in other schools within and outside the trust. Teachers enthusiastically share good practice, are very open to new ideas, benefit from the discussion and respond well to advice received from senior leaders. Consequently, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good and continues to improve.
- Senior leaders have very successfully tackled the weaknesses identified in the last inspection. They review school performance information highly effectively and they regularly check the quality of teaching and learning across all departments. As a result, pupils' outcomes have significantly improved and the quality of teaching overall is engaging and strong.
- Leaders are highly evaluative. They routinely analyse and thoroughly scrutinise all aspects of their work. They regularly review the curriculum and check the progress of current pupils with middle leaders. Middle leaders take appropriate actions to address pupils' underachievement and provide support for colleagues. Over the last two years, this approach has diminished the differences between the progress of all pupils and those who are disadvantaged.
- The curriculum is reviewed regularly and is broad, challenging and interesting. At the same time, it is flexible enough to meet the needs of all pupils, including the exceptionally high number of pupils who join the school at times other than the usual times. Leaders ensure that the well-planned curriculum provides pupils with a firm foundation for the next stage of their education. Consequently, pupils' progress from their usually low and varying points is strong in a range of subjects, including both English and mathematics.
- Leaders use the additional funding very well to support pupils who are disadvantaged. There is a very good and effective range of support and enrichment activities to develop pupils' skills. As a result, current disadvantaged pupils make progress at least in line with, or better than, their peers and the national average.
- School leaders and governors make very effective use of other additional funding, including that provided to support pupils with SEND and the catch-up funding in Year 7. With 40 different home languages spoken by pupils in the school, the catch-up funding is accelerating pupils' ability to read, communicate better, understand challenging texts and apply basic numeracy skills so they can access the full school curriculum.

- Leaders are working hard to develop a strong culture of reading. There is a continuous whole-school focus on literacy and communication, which is driving up standards. This was confirmed when inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Leaders have created a programme of personal development which incorporates building self-confidence and self-esteem. The programme provides pupils with an arsenal of strategies so they 'bounce back' from adversity, while remaining highly ambitious for their future. This programme incorporates careers and college programmes and is positively influencing pupils' next steps
- Pupils have numerous and various opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. The taught curriculum, together with assemblies and visits from outside speakers, ensures that all pupils learn about world issues. As a result, they develop a social conscience and respect the differences between religions and cultures within their local community. The respectful environment in this multicultural and diverse school is testament to the effectiveness of this work.
- Leaders have benefited greatly from the support received from the White Rose Academies Trust. The trust's chief executive officer is aspirational and has helped to build leadership capacity, while a range of advisers have helped develop the curriculum and teaching across a range of subjects. As a result, senior and middle leaders, together with staff, are now better equipped to drive further school improvement.

Governance of the school

- Governance is highly effective. The local accountability board includes very skilled and experienced governors who provide support and challenge to school leaders. They are dedicated to improving the life chances of young people in the area.
- Governors have a very accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have correctly prioritised key areas for improvement, understand what actions are being taken and are aware how these are adding value.
- Members of the governing body, led very well by the experienced chair, visit the school regularly, both formally and informally. They know the school very well and carry out their statutory duties diligently.
- Governors meet regularly with members of the trust to review actions taken and progress made towards school improvement targets.
- Governors scrutinise the use of additional funding and the difference this makes to pupils' outcomes. The use of the pupil premium has contributed to a significant diminishing of differences between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and that of their peers in school and other pupils nationally.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding in the school, which effectively supports the highly transient pupil population. The designated safeguarding leader ensures that all staff have appropriate training. For example, staff are extremely aware of the dangers of child sexual exploitation, radicalisation, female genital

mutilation and criminal exploitation of young people linked to drug trafficking (county lines). As a result, staff know what to do should there be a safeguarding concern about a pupil. Staff act quickly and appropriately to share any concerns they may have.

- Records about safeguarding and child protection concerns are thorough. They show that leaders take appropriate and comprehensive action as it is needed. Leaders work effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils receive additional support. Leaders make and record thorough checks on the adults who work at the school.
- Pupils report that they feel safe and know what to do to stay safe, including when online. Pupils also say that bullying sometimes does happen and, when it does, teachers and leaders tackle it quickly. Inspection evidence and the views of staff, parents and carers confirm this.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is now consistently good in most subjects. The leadership of teaching is very well developed and has significantly improved most teachers' classroom practice. Teachers' strong subject knowledge, effective planning and probing questioning identify misconceptions and deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Most teachers have high expectations of their pupils and set challenging activities. Common routines, such as using the 'knowledge organiser' tasks at the beginning of each lesson and as homework to link to previous learning, help pupils learn and remember more. As a result, most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make strong progress.
- The positive relationships that exist between staff and pupils make a clear contribution to the quality of learning. The work in most pupils' books is well presented and shows that they take pride in their learning.
- Leaders' teaching and learning policy reflects their commitment to developing thinking skills as a key element to improving pupils' knowledge and understanding. In every observation during the inspection, pupils spent time on a 'red zone' task, applying and reflecting on their learning so that they could identify any gaps in their understanding.
- The school's arrangements for assessing pupils' progress are particularly effective. Most teachers routinely check on progress. Leaders use the school's teaching, learning and assessment policy to identify strengths and areas for further development for each teacher. As a result, senior and middle leaders know well the strengths and weaknesses in teaching in each subject.
- The special educational needs coordinator is highly skilled and ensures that teachers are aware of individual pupils' needs and how best to support these pupils. Teaching assistants are effective in their support for pupils' learning because teachers and teaching assistants regularly check on the progress of individual pupils. Consequently, teaching is adapted to make sure that pupils with SEND make strong progress from their starting points.
- Leaders have ensured that there is strong and effective support for pupils who speak English as an additional language and for pupils who are new to school. A comprehensive weekly literacy and numeracy programme ensures that these pupils

develop their reading, comprehension, numeracy and communication skills quickly. Consequently, they can catch up with their peers and access the challenging content of the curriculum subjects.

- Most teachers use pupils' assessment information routinely to plan activities that deepen pupils' understanding. Careful planning enables pupils to work at an appropriate rate, moving on to more challenging work when they are ready. However, in some subjects, teachers do not provide effective challenge for pupils of different abilities.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils receive this education in specific timetabled lessons, form time, assemblies and across different subjects. Leaders ensure that the school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders' focus on cultural diversity is particularly strong and contributes to the calm and harmonious atmosphere in the school. Pupils are respectful to each other, staff and visitors. They understand well the differences between different cultures and religions.
- Pupils are reflective and understand the responsibilities of being good citizens. They have opportunities to develop their leadership skills as members of the student council or as a prefect. Pupils also act as 'buddies' to other pupils of the same heritage who are new to the school and are at early stages of developing their knowledge of the English language.
- Pupils appreciate the impartial careers advice and guidance they receive, which begin in Year 7. Leaders have established close collaboration with local colleges, employers and universities, all contributing in raising the aspirations of pupils. All pupils have work experience organised for them in Year 10. This is helping pupils, when they reach Year 11, to think carefully about possible career options and raising their aspirations. As a result, over time, the proportion of pupils continuing into further education, employment and training is increasing.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe online and how to avoid potential dangers when using social media. Consequently, pupils feel safe and know what to do if they have any concerns. Most pupils and parents who made their views known said that any bullying is dealt with effectively. Inspection evidence confirms this.
- Leaders ensure that the welfare of the small number of pupils who attend the school's alternative education provision is of a high priority. There is effective communication between school staff and the providers. Pupils follow a personalised curriculum that is appropriate to their needs. Consequently, the pupils who are educated in the school's alternative education provision are well cared for and behave well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour has improved since the last inspection and school procedures ensure that any incidents are dealt with quickly and efficiently. Pupils are clear about the consequences and sanctions associated with specific actions, following the introduction of the revised behaviour policy. There are occasional incidents of bullying and, when it does occur, it is dealt with appropriately by staff. Views of staff, pupils and parents and inspection evidence confirm this.
- Leaders' systematic approach to behavioural issues and focus on positive behaviour have reduced the number of incidents of poor behaviour since the last inspection. Most pupils conduct themselves very well, both in lessons and at social times. They move calmly around the site and wear their uniform smartly. Most teachers apply the behaviour policy consistently but there is some inconsistency in the use of rewards across subjects.
- Fixed-term exclusions have fallen sharply since the last inspection and are now below national averages. Fixed-term exclusions of pupils with SEND have also reduced sharply since the last inspection but still remain higher than for their peers. Supporting this group of pupils to further reduce fixed-term exclusions continues to be a high priority for school leaders.
- The attendance of pupils has significantly improved since the last inspection. Leaders and the attendance team have worked hard to improve the attendance of all groups of pupils and eliminate any barriers to good attendance. This work has been strengthened further by the strategic appointment of staff from the local community. As a result, the overall rates of absence and persistent absence are now below national averages. However, although improving, the attendance of pupils with SEND is lower than that of their peers and the national average, and remains a focus for school leaders.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2018, the progress of pupils leaving school at the end of Year 11 was in line with the national average and indicated a strong year-on-year improvement in progress since the last inspection. The published information did not include the pupils who joined the school late in their education, speaking little or no English. Inspectors scrutinised school assessment information and work of all current pupils in the school.
- Senior leaders are highly skilled in monitoring pupils' progress, regardless of when pupils join the school. Leaders accurately assess pupils when they arrive and set challenging targets for all pupils. Together with middle leaders, senior leaders effectively monitor pupils' learning in order to identify and support any who are falling behind. As a result, the progress of current pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils, across most subjects, including English, mathematics and science, is strong.
- Inspection evidence, work in pupils' books and school assessment information show that, from their varying and low starting points, most current pupils in Years 10 and 11 are continuing to make strong progress in a wide range of subjects. Most pupils'

attainment on entry is well below the national average. Despite this, the proportions of pupils achieving a standard pass (grade 4) and a strong pass (grade 5) in English and mathematics combined continue to improve, although they remain below national averages.

- Many pupils arrive at Leeds City Academy unprepared for secondary school because they have low literacy and numeracy scores at key stage 2 and/or they are pupils who are at the early stages of speaking English as an additional language. These pupils follow a comprehensive bespoke programme which helps them to catch up. This work helps them to access the curriculum due to the strong improvements they make in their reading, comprehension and basic numeracy.
- Disadvantaged pupils make strong progress from their starting points. The gap in progress and attainment between this group and their peers and other pupils nationally is diminishing. Pupils with SEND are also making strong progress in most subjects as a result of effective teaching and tailored support.
- Destination information for pupils leaving Year 11 shows that they are being well prepared to move into further education, employment or training. Leaders ensure that all pupils receive high-quality careers education, advice and guidance.

School details

Unique reference number	139646
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10087566

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 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	612
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Paul Morrissey
Principal	Richard Chattoe
Telephone number	01132 844 260
Website	www.leedscityacademy.org.uk
Email address	info@leedscityacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	3–4 May 2017

Information about this school

- Leeds City Academy is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school converted to an academy in September 2014 and joined the White Rose Academies Trust. The principal has been in place since March 2019. The work of the trust is overseen by a board of trustees. Some responsibilities are delegated to the local accountability board. The trust supports three secondary schools.
- Most pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is significantly higher than the national average, with 40 different home languages being spoken at the school.
- The proportion of pupils entering or leaving the school other than at the usual times is exceptionally high due to the high mobility of families in and out of the area. A significant proportion of pupils are new to English.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is significantly higher than the national average. Half the pupils are supported through this additional

funding.

- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The school currently uses Leeds City College, Stephen Longfellow Academy and Pennington Centre as alternative providers of education for a very small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited parts of 33 lessons covering most curriculum areas and most teaching staff. Some of these visits took place with senior leaders. During visits to classrooms, inspectors looked in pupils' workbooks and questioned pupils about their learning. Inspectors also visited form learning time and observed an assembly for Year 10 pupils.
- Discussions took place with the principal, vice- and assistant principals, middle leaders and members of the wider body of staff, including newly qualified teachers.
- Discussions took place with the chief executive officer from the White Rose Academies Trust. Inspectors also met with the chair and members of the local accountability board.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils from most year groups about what it is like to be a young person at the school. Inspectors also listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school, including between lessons, at breaktime and at lunchtime.
- Inspectors took account of the 25 responses from parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including the 14 free-text responses. They also analysed the 79 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 30 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors examined records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors also scrutinised documents, including school development plans, minutes of governing body meetings, leaders' monitoring notes and information about pupils' achievement.

Inspection team

Dimitris Spiliotis, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Stephen Crossley	Ofsted Inspector
David Pridding	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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