

Leicester Partnership School

Carisbrooke Gardens, Leicester, Leicestershire LE2 3PR

Inspection dates

2–3 July 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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- School leaders are aspirational for all pupils. The headteacher has established a shared vision which aims to ensure that all pupils are successfully re-engaged in their education.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour well. They provide effective support and guidance to help pupils learn how to manage their own behaviour.
- The school's curriculum is personalised to meet pupils' academic and personal development needs. Teachers plan lessons to broaden pupils' knowledge and skills and to give them a purpose for learning.
- Governance of the school is strong. Members of the management committee provide good support and challenge to school leaders. They are determined for all pupils to succeed in their education.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are good. Staff use a variety of highly effective techniques to ensure that pupils are well cared for and kept safe.
- The large majority of pupils return to mainstream education. This is because they make significant progress in learning to manage their behaviour.
- Parents and carers are very positive about the support their children receive at the school. They appreciate the helpful staff and the school's flexible approach to ensuring that their children access education.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. They receive effective guidance, which supports them well in transferring between schools or in securing places in further education or training.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress, sometimes better than their in-school peers.
- The quality of teaching is good. However, some teachers do not use time in lessons effectively to ensure that pupils make strong progress. This is particularly the case with the most able pupils.
- Middle leadership roles are underdeveloped.
- The school offers a range of courses and experiences to pupils. However, recent improvements in the variety of accredited courses are in the early days of implementation and cannot yet be measured for sustained impact on improving pupils' outcomes.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Insist that teachers maximise time in lessons by consistently planning work which challenges all pupils – and particularly the most able – to achieve their best.
- Develop middle leadership roles to have a strong impact on improving outcomes for pupils.
- Maintain and build on the recent improvements in the range and quality of courses offered to pupils in order to raise their aspirations and broaden the options available for their future lives.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- School leaders demonstrate passion and determination for every pupil to succeed. Leaders and staff work as an effective team to embed their vision for all pupils to be successfully reintegrated into education to improve their life chances.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have implemented an effective plan of action to improve the school. Leaders carefully scrutinise pupils' personal development and well-being, as well as their academic achievements. Pupils are cared for well and the majority make good progress in their learning.
- School leaders have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas in need of further development. They work closely with the local authority to develop necessary strategies for improvement. Leaders continually reflect on and hone the school improvement strategies to ensure that the school provides pupils with every chance of success. For example, leaders wisely identified the teaching of science could be improved to offer pupils more challenging and interesting course options. Specialist training for teaching staff has taken place and a new science laboratory is to be installed shortly.
- Leaders use alternative provision very well to meet pupils' needs and to motivate them to engage in learning. The wide variety of vocational and academic courses ensure that pupils' needs are met in various ways, but always through accredited courses which will improve their life chances.
- Systems to assess and monitor pupils' progress are detailed. Leaders continually scrutinise and respond to the information staff provide. Where pupils make less progress than they should, leaders react quickly to ensure that appropriate support is quickly provided.
- Leaders have ensured that the systems for understanding and managing pupils' behaviour are rigorous and effective. Staff receive good-quality training in this aspect of the school's work, which is linked to pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Leadership of the provision for pupils with SEND is strong. For those pupils who have an identified SEND, information from their education, health and care (EHC) plan is used to plan teaching strategies and identify accurately pupils' personal and academic targets. Reviews are carried out regularly to reflect pupils' progress and changing circumstances when they transfer between schools. This is particularly the case for pupils in Year 11, where careful consideration is given to pupils' transition to college or training.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. Additional support and activities are carefully designed to raise their achievement, enhance their social and emotional development and improve their attendance. They make progress which is similar to or better than that of their in-school peers. Attendance for some disadvantaged pupils has improved as a result of leaders' actions.
- Leaders work collaboratively with the local authority, local secondary schools and special schools to support pupils through the change of school. Leaders check the

impact of their actions to improve the school through effective links with two special schools. Staff across the schools share good practice to support improvement.

- From key stage 3, pupils are well prepared for the move to post-16 education or training by effective careers guidance and advice given by an independent business service. Visitors to the school and the wide variety of work placements through alternative providers enhance pupils' experiences and prepare them for their future.
- Over recent years, the school was restructured and it is now located on one site from the previous three. However, the number of pupils attending the school has remained the same and demand for places is increasing. Leaders are frustrated by the small size of the building. The limited facilities on the site restrict the quality of the provision and courses the school can provide.
- Senior leaders and managers work together as a cohesive team. However, middle leadership is underdeveloped. Leaders have in place plans to develop middle leaders' roles during the next academic year to support the headteacher in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning to help to improve pupils' outcomes.
- The school's curriculum provides pupils with a range of learning experiences. Leaders place a strong focus on English, mathematics and personal development to ensure that pupils are well prepared for their future lives. A variety of interesting themes of work and courses inspire pupils to learn across key stage 3 and key stage 4. Pupils regularly use and apply their English and mathematics skills in other subjects. However, so recent are improvements to the range and number of accredited courses offered to pupils, including in English, mathematics and science, they cannot yet be securely evaluated for their sustained impact on pupils' outcomes.

Governance of the school

- Members of the management committee have a range of relevant knowledge and expertise. They share leaders' determination to ensure that all pupils who attend the school have the best possible chance of making a success of their education. They provide very effective challenge and support to senior leaders.
- The management committee members have a secure strategic understanding of the performance of the school. They work closely with the local authority and the headteacher to ensure that staff are deployed effectively and additional funding is allocated efficiently to improve outcomes for pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Staff and leaders, including members of the management committee, have a good understanding of the predominant risks facing pupils.
- Staff are trained in responding to a range of safeguarding issues. They are fully aware of their responsibilities relating to safeguarding, including regarding pupils' mental health. For example, members of the personal development team provide pupils with effective pastoral support.

- Leaders maintain good communications with external agencies and professionals to make sure pupils that are safe and their families have appropriate support. For example, leaders work closely with the youth offending services and the police. This ensures that information is shared promptly when a relevant concern is raised about a pupil.
- Leaders make thorough checks on the safeguarding arrangements in place at the range of alternative providers used by the school. School leaders ensure that there is a consistent and vigilant culture of safeguarding for pupils who spend a large part of their time away from the school.
- Pupils, parents and staff all agree that pupils are kept safe. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through various aspects of the school's curriculum. For example, pupils learn how to recognise and respond to known risks, such as gang affiliation, drug misuse and cyber bullying.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Across the school, the quality of teaching is good. Since the last inspection, good-quality training for staff and support from senior leaders have improved the quality of teaching and learning. Where teaching is less effective, leaders provide support so that it improves.
- Teachers and support staff develop good relationships with pupils. These relationships contribute positively to inspiring pupils, who arrive at the school with little enthusiasm for learning, to commit to their work. Staff are well informed about the needs of individual pupils.
- Mixed-age small groups encourage pupils to support each other and build trusting relationships with key adults. Staff ensure that pupils who need extra care socially, emotionally or academically have someone to whom they can turn.
- In line with the school's agreed policy, teachers encourage pupils to review their learning and to look critically at their own work. Most teachers identify promptly gaps or misconceptions in pupils' learning. This helps pupils to improve their accuracy and raise their self-esteem.
- Teachers adapt learning to meet pupils' needs and interests. For example, in a mathematics lesson, pupils were engrossed in their learning about the properties of shapes because the teacher used an online computer quiz game to encourage them to take part. In another lesson, pupils learned about the importance of understanding emotions through 'hot seating' in a drama lesson. Pupils were able to express empathy as a result.
- Teachers and support staff use effective questioning to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils respond positively to this strategy and to the prompts and praise staff provide to encourage them to take part in lessons and do their best.
- Teachers and members of the pastoral services team implement a range of additional support and activities to ensure that pupils receive effective support to access and engage with learning. These activities and targeted support contribute towards improving pupils' outcomes across different subjects.

- Teachers of English and mathematics have benefited from high-quality training to improve the quality of teaching and learning across key stage 3 and key stage 4. Although this training has yet to show sustainable impact, the school's own assessment information shows that pupils' outcomes are improving in English and mathematics. Higher proportions of pupils in Year 11 were entered for GCSE English and mathematics this academic year than in previous years.
- Leaders have established a consistent and effective approach to assessment which tracks pupils' progress from the time they start at the school. Most teachers use this information well to plan work which matches pupils' academic and personal development needs. However, some teachers do not ensure that pupils, particularly those who are most able, are appropriately challenged in their work. This is further affected by the fact that some teachers do not use the time available in lessons as well as they could to make the most of pupils' learning. Occasionally, pupils sit and wait for teachers to move them on in their learning. Consequently, not all pupils make the progress they could.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of bullying and say it is very rare in school. Records shown to inspectors by school leaders confirm this to be accurate.
- Pupils are supported to re-engage in education in a nurturing environment. There are regular checks on pupils' welfare. Leaders ensure that all staff are fully informed about pupils' well-being through daily staff briefings. There are regular multi-agency meetings involving school staff, external professionals and parents. Any concerns, including those relating to safeguarding, are flagged up promptly so that personalised support packages can be put in place to help pupils and their parents, if required.
- Pupils who have experienced, or are experiencing, trauma in their lives are mentored effectively by skilled adults to manage their behaviour and develop their mental resilience. Pupils are offered a range of courses and experiences which help them to develop their independence and grow in confidence and self-worth. One parent, typical of many, told inspectors: 'The school has enabled my child to grow into a mature, confident young person who now realises that education can offer so many more opportunities.'
- Staff work closely with a wide range of professionals to meet appropriately pupils' needs. The curriculum is carefully designed to focus on addressing the reasons why pupils have been at risk of exclusion or have been excluded from their mainstream schools. Bespoke packages of support for individual pupils are quickly put into place shortly after their admission into the school. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of their personal safety and the consequences of their behaviour on themselves and others.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. There is a culture of mutual respect and trust, which develops pupils' self-awareness. Clearly established routines and

consistent expectations for good attitudes to learning ensure that pupils make good progress academically, emotionally and socially. For example, all key stage 3 pupils understand the 'REACH' reward system, where pupils can earn points for their good attitudes to learning. Successful accumulation of these points ultimately leads to access to the 'platinum room', where pupils can enjoy a variety of extra-curricular activities.

- A strength of the school is the flexible approach to making sure that pupils are accessing education. Pupils follow a wide variety of vocational learning and courses according to their interests and needs. Leaders of alternative providers highly appreciate the support and availability of school staff, who regularly visit pupils in their provision to check on their well-being, the quality of their learning and their behaviour.
- The school's comprehensive programme for careers guidance and advice prepares pupils well for their next steps when they leave school. For example, initiatives such as visits by pupils to potential colleges and visitors from local businesses to school have helped to raise pupils' aspirations for their future. In 2018, most pupils went on to appropriate placements, including further education, training or apprenticeships.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe within the community and when online. Pupils learn about the consequences of radicalisation, gang membership and knife crime, the effects of the misuse of drugs and what constitute respectful effective relationships.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enter the school at various times throughout the school year. Staff quickly assess pupils' behavioural needs. They put in place any additional support and plan to help pupils manage their behaviour. As a result, pupils generally make good progress in improving their behaviour for learning.
- Leaders monitor pupils' behaviour effectively. Pupils understand the expectations for their behaviour because adults make time to discuss the consequences of poor behaviour and set clear targets towards which pupils work. Leaders ensure that staff use calm positive behaviour management strategies to promote positive attitudes and behaviour.
- Staff make sure that pupils understand that, if they disrupt the learning of others, they will be removed from the lesson. However, pupils know that, after some 'time out', they will be expected to return to the lesson to continue their learning. Inappropriate behaviour is challenged and dealt with effectively by staff. Staff are trained to be alert to potentially disruptive behaviour and de-escalate this effectively. Staff have received training for physical intervention, which is used as a last resort. Any use of physical intervention is thoroughly recorded and scrutinised by leaders, and parents are informed.
- Incidents of poor or inappropriate behaviour are recorded and analysed to pinpoint possible triggers and to assess which interventions have a positive influence on pupils' behaviour. Consequently, the number of fixed-term exclusions is small. There have been no permanent exclusions over recent years.
- School leaders have established effective systems to manage pupils' behaviour through

successful specialist training for staff. When pupils struggle with their behaviour, staff give them time and support to manage their behaviour in a nurturing environment. The large majority of pupils and parents speak positively about the way the school manages pupils' behaviour.

- Most pupils attend school regularly. Leaders follow up any absences with tenacity. This often includes close liaison with the mainstream schools in which pupils are dual-registered and with external agencies. For example, leaders will contact the police if necessary. Leaders have in place a rigorous system to check on the attendance of pupils in alternative provision. As a result, any incidents of non-attendance are followed up promptly to ensure pupils' safety and well-being.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils enter the school with a wide variety of different starting points. This is often because pupils have experienced difficulties engaging with mainstream education or as a result of poor attendance or non-attendance at mainstream schools.
- Teachers make prompt initial assessments of pupils' academic attainment when they enter the school. These assessments are used well to plan pupils' learning and personal development. Consequently, the large majority of pupils make good progress from their starting points in English and mathematics, as well as in a range of other subjects. Pupils who remain at the school for longer periods of time make significant academic and personal progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND make as much progress as, and sometimes better progress than, their in-school peers because of additional targeted teaching and programmes of effective support.
- Pupils who arrive mid-year or at a late stage in their education in key stage 4 make good progress. Precisely tailored additional support and appropriate access to a wide range of courses and experiences have enabled pupils to achieve well.
- After the previous inspection, leaders successfully increased the number of pupils accessing accredited courses in English, mathematics and science. For example, this year, more pupils in Year 11 were entered for recognised qualifications in English and mathematics, including GCSEs. Leaders are not complacent, however, and have plans in place to extend further the courses on offer in the new academic year.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision make good progress and gain relevant qualifications, including in English and mathematics.
- A high proportion of pupils who attend the school return to mainstream school successfully.
- The majority of pupils leave school at the end of key stage 4 to participate in further education, employment or training. Leaders provide independent high-quality advice and guidance to pupils of all ages to ensure that pupils are well informed and secure placements when they leave.
- In some lessons, teachers do not ensure that work for the most able pupils is consistently challenging them to achieve their very best. On these occasions, pupils do not make as much progress as they should.

School details

Unique reference number	131535
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10081598

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Appropriate authority	The management committee
Chair	Christopher Bruce
Headteacher	Shaun Whittingham
Telephone number	01163 033 281
Website	www.lps.leicester.sch.uk
Email address	support@lps.leicester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 July 2018

Information about this school

- The Leicester Partnership School provides education, provision and support for pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour. The majority of pupils are at risk of exclusion or have been permanently excluded from their mainstream secondary schools.
- The school provides part-time and short-duration programmes of education designed to re-engage pupils in education in order for them to return to mainstream education as soon as possible. Some pupils are supported at the school for longer periods while they wait for a place to be allocated in specialist provision.
- A higher-than-average proportion of pupils have SEND. A large proportion of these pupils have an EHC plan or are in the process of applying for an EHC plan.
- More than half of the pupils who attend the school are disadvantaged, which is higher than the national average.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes, where they access learning to suit their needs.
- The school uses 20 alternative providers in the local area to give pupils experiences

and courses which are aimed to meet their needs and enable them to acquire qualifications for future careers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all year groups. This included some lessons observed jointly with leaders.
- Inspectors talked with pupils about their school and looked at examples of pupils' work. Inspectors visited an alternative provider used by the school and held telephone conversations with the leaders of six other alternative providers.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team, including the assistant headteacher. The lead inspector met with three members of the management committee, including the chair, and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met formally with one parent and held telephone conversations with five other parents during the inspection. Inspectors considered the 25 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Parent View, or to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils. However, recent surveys for parents and pupils carried out by the school were taken into consideration.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including: the school's self-evaluation of current performance and plans for improvement; the school's most recent information on achievement and progress; information relating to safeguarding; information about behaviour management; information relating to the school's use of the pupil premium funding and funding for pupils with SEND; the school's most recent information relating to attendance; and minutes from a number of the management committee meetings.

Inspection team

Stephanie Innes-Taylor, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Julian Scholefield

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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