

Springwell Leeds Academy

Middleton Road, Leeds LS10 3JA

Inspection dates

18 to 19 June 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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have established a strong vision to promote pupils' well-being and achievement. Staff live out this vision in their work with pupils.
- Pupils respond positively to staff. Pupils develop effective personal and social skills and achieve well. They are prepared well for the next steps in their education and training.
- Leaders have demonstrated that they can bring about improvement. Behaviour systems help most pupils to manage their behaviour well. Teaching and learning are increasingly effective, as the school has rapidly grown over the last three years.
- Leaders and governors check pupils' progress and personal development carefully. They ensure that training improves teaching. They ensure that the curriculum meets pupils' needs well.
- The curriculum is a growing strength of the school. It is individualised to meet the different needs of pupils. Over time, a wider range of accredited courses is being offered to respond to the needs and aspirations of pupils.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs are met through a well-considered range of approaches.
- Middle leaders in foundation subjects have not developed curriculum plans to the same high levels seen, for example, in English and mathematics.
- Staff use their strong knowledge of pupils' needs to plan lessons that interest and engage them. Positive relationships motivate pupils. Occasionally, staff miss opportunities to plan learning precisely enough and to challenge pupils to deepen and reapply their learning.
- Pupils conduct themselves well. They learn to manage their behaviours better over time. A diminishing proportion of pupils struggle to behave well.
- Attendance is improving. However, some pupils do not attend well enough, despite the focused efforts of the school.
- Pupils learn how to keep safe. They understand the harm that bullying causes. They feel safe in school and trust staff to help them.
- Careers guidance helps pupils make informed choices about their futures. Pupils are well supported to move on to further education and training.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further by:
 - ensuring pupils are challenged to move their learning forward as soon as they are ready to do so
 - sharpening the sequencing of learning activities so that pupils have more frequent opportunities to demonstrate and consolidate their knowledge and skills.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management further by:
 - developing middle leaders' skills to sharpen further curriculum plans that underpin highly effective teaching
 - developing the work to bring about a further reduction in the number of pupils who do not attend regularly enough
 - continually refining the effectiveness of the school behaviour management arrangements to reduce further incidents of misbehaviour.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders and governors work together to sustain their shared vision to provide high-quality personal support for all pupils so that they can develop the personal skills they need and achieve highly.
- Staff model the school's values in their day-to-day interactions with pupils and with each other. As a result, they create a culture of tolerance and respect, in which pupils play a positive part. This motivates pupils to engage in their learning. Pupils grow in self-confidence and make strong progress.
- Leaders have put in place strong systems to check the effectiveness of arrangements to meet pupils' personal and learning needs. Leaders ensure that similar approaches are taken across all four sites of the school so that they can build an accurate and detailed picture of the school's strengths and where they need to make further improvements. Detailed planning by senior leaders ensures that, across the three secondary sites and one primary site, approaches to planning, teaching and learning and improvement are leading to effective transition from one key stage to another.
- Staff feel valued and recognise the importance of the training they receive. As a result, they develop their practices to better meet the needs of pupils. For example, staff are trained to use de-escalation techniques to help pupils regain their composure when they struggle to manage their emotions. Staff use the training they have received to plan learning and conduct activities in an orderly manner. However, a small number of pupils continue to struggle to maintain positive behaviours. Staff deal effectively and sensitively with these situations. However, the strategies that pupils learn to manage their behaviours at moments of stress or anger are not effective for all pupils.
- Monitoring of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment informs further training for staff. As staff skills develop, pupils, many of whom have histories of significant disruption in their education, re-engage with learning and make strong progress. However, leaders do not make full use of their monitoring activities to ensure that pupils are challenged to deepen and consolidate their learning across the full range of the curriculum.
- The curriculum is a growing strength of the school. Leaders carefully individualise each pupil's learning to meet the needs identified in their education, health and care (EHC) plans. This helps pupils develop the personal skills they need to interact positively with each other and staff, and become ready to learn. However, the sharply defined focus for each step in learning seen in English, mathematics and science plans is not reflected consistently in other subjects. Plans in some other subjects are not specific enough about what pupils will learn and be able to do.
- Leaders have broadened the range of accredited courses to respond to the interests, ambitions and needs of pupils. Pupils are supported by a well-considered programme of careers information advice and guidance. They make well-informed choices about their futures and take the next steps in their education and training with confidence.

- The personal development programme provides pupils with opportunities to learn about healthy relationships and respect for others who come from different backgrounds. Frequent off-site visits give pupils opportunities to put into practice the social skills they learn in school. The programme is thoroughly planned so that pupils develop their understanding of how to keep safe and how to manage risks. Leaders ensure that the formal arrangements to keep pupils safe, for example safer recruitment procedures, underpin pupils' learning about keeping safe. This has created a culture of safety in all the school does.
- The focused use of additional funding ensures that pupils are supported to make strong progress in mathematics and English in particular. This forms part of the school's strategy to re-engage pupils in education by enabling them to access to the curriculum as a whole more easily. Additional funding for physical education and sport helps pupils develop their physical skills, including gross and fine motor skills, and develop social skills through sports activity.
- Governors and senior leaders ensure that leaders at all levels have frequent opportunities to meet and work together across the four sites of the school so that effective practice can be shared and developed. For example, the current research project on 'stretch and challenge' in literacy is being developed for implementation across the school. This is strengthening the school's approach to curriculum development.
- Governors and leaders work with staff from the trust to ensure that school performance is reviewed carefully and leaders are challenged to make improvements. They have an accurate and detailed understanding of the school's performance. By collaborating across the trust's range of schools, leaders ensure that effective practice is enhanced step by step.

Governance of the school

- Governors set about supporting and challenging school leaders effectively. They have the skills and knowledge to monitor and evaluate the school's performance alongside members of the trust and senior leaders.
- Governors ensure that safeguarding remains the school's first priority, so that pupils are kept safe and can flourish. Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective. They engage additional external support to verify their views on safeguarding arrangements.
- Governors have a detailed understanding of information about pupils' development and well-being, and their progress, so that they can support and challenge leaders appropriately. As a consequence, governors have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school, and those areas that need most improvement.
- Governors support and challenge school leaders to identify and address the training needs of staff so that they can be confident that pupils' needs are met well. Governors check that pupils' personal and academic needs are known and planned for carefully.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Governors check that safeguarding arrangements are effective by using information from internal monitoring, the monitoring activities conducted by the trust and the information gathered from external review.
- Safer recruitment protocols are followed and all pre-employment checks are carried out and recorded carefully.
- The school has a well-considered safeguarding policy. Leaders make sure that safeguarding leaders are well trained and that all staff have regular training in order to ensure that they remain vigilant for any signs of abuse or neglect. Staff know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil. Safeguarding leaders work well with a range of other teams and agencies to make sure pupils get the help they need.
- Leaders take care to ensure that safeguarding arrangements in other settings run by alternative providers are thoroughly checked before pupils attend.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have a detailed understanding of pupils' needs. They establish regular routines and positive relationships with pupils. They have high expectations of pupils' conduct. Teachers establish an orderly, calm environment in which to learn. They consistently challenge pupils if they use inappropriate language. As a result, pupils re-engage with learning after a period of settling in. Very largely, pupils focus well on their learning as a result.
- The use of tiered therapeutic interventions supports pupils effectively, to re-establish learning habits and to help them develop strategies to deal with their emotions, for example of anxiety or stress. As a consequence, pupils begin to build resilience in their approaches to learning and working with peers and adults in the classroom. Frequent visits away from school give pupils many opportunities to practise the strategies they have learned to manage their emotions and behave well.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use this to engage pupils and awaken their curiosity. Teachers regularly plan different activities for pupils from different starting points. This helps pupils make progress. However, staff do not consistently provide opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their knowledge, consolidate their understanding and develop their skills further.
- Staff are quick to spot when pupils have misunderstood. Teachers are skilled at providing alternative explanations and modelling. However, occasionally, staff are not demanding enough and accept work which could be better. Staff miss opportunities to move pupils on to more demanding work quickly.
- Staff have particular strengths in developing pupils' English and mathematical skills. The greater precision seen in curriculum plans in English and mathematics, and the effective use of additional support, helps pupils improve their literacy and numeracy skills quickly. In turn, this helps pupils access their learning better in other subject

areas.

- In foundation subjects, some planning is not precise enough to help pupils build their knowledge and skills step by step over time as it is in English and mathematics, for example. Pupils begin to read with greater fluency and understanding. They can reapply their mathematical knowledge, for example, in science and design technology.
- Staff provide pupils with helpful advice on how to improve their learning. Pupils respond positively to this advice and make corrections which help them learn from earlier mistakes. Pupils are proud of their achievements. However, pupils do not always have enough opportunities to apply their learning in new contexts.
- Staff provide parents with clear information about how well pupils are making progress towards achieving the standards expected by the school. The school sets targets for pupils that take consideration of their EHC plans.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- As pupils settle into school life after significant periods of disruption in their education, they re-engage with education and learning increasingly well. They grow in confidence as learners as they begin to experience success. Pupils move punctually to lessons and respond well to staff instructions.
- Successful therapeutic interventions help pupils to develop strategies to manage their own behaviours. When pupils need additional support to do so, they respond positively to staff who help them. As a result, the numbers of serious misbehaviour incidents, particularly those requiring physical intervention, have declined steadily over time. A small number of pupils require additional support from staff to maintain good behaviour by themselves. Some pupils have not developed effective strategies to help them behave well.
- A small but declining number of pupils remain on reduced timetables. The school ensures that it keeps regular contact with them and other services involved. The school focuses hard on working towards longer-term solutions that meet these pupils' needs more fully.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves well emotionally and physically. They learn about healthy relationships and the risks associated with the use of the internet. Pupils show they understand the risks of social networking sites, for example, and the steps they can take to manage them. As they grow in maturity, pupils also understand the importance of recognising when they need additional support and help. They trust staff to help them if they have a concern.
- As they grow in self-confidence, pupils benefit from trips and visits out of school. In these contexts, they can reapply their learning about how to conduct themselves and manage their emotions. For example, pupils in Year 11 visited a careers fair where they were able to talk with further education and training representatives about their skills

and aspirations for the future.

- Pupils understand the harm bullying causes, and how they should respond to it. They feel safe in school and well-supported. Pupils reapply their learning about bullying to real-life situations, which helps them understand about discrimination in wider society.
- The school ensures that pupils who attend an alternative provision for a part of the week are kept safe. Leaders check providers' arrangements to safeguard their pupils are fit for purpose. The school keeps in touch with providers very regularly to ensure that pupils attend and are achieving well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good
- During the school day, in lessons and around the school, good behaviour is the norm. Pupils show respect for each other, staff and for visitors. Pupils use their knowledge of each other's needs sensitively to help each other. For example, they remind each other of expectations of behaviour, or what is healthy to eat or drink. Pupils sustain their good behaviour and keep improving it over time. They become less dependent on adults to help them manage themselves.
- Pupils become proud of what they can achieve as they engage ever better in learning. This, in turn, spurs them on to remain engaged and apply themselves.
- While some instances of poor behaviour still occur, these reduce as pupils grow in confidence and develop skills to manage themselves. A very small number of pupils on reduced timetables, who present more difficult and persistent behaviour challenges, receive continued care, as school leaders work with other agencies to find effective solutions and placements.
- The vast majority of pupils improve their attendance rapidly once they settle into the school. Overall attendance is improving steadily from term to term and is higher than in previous years. In the primary phase, pupils' attendance is in line with the national average for all pupils. Nevertheless, a number of pupils, particularly in the secondary phase, do not come to school regularly enough, despite the efforts the school has made so far.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- From a range of starting points, pupils, all of whom have an EHC plan, make strong progress overall, across a number of subjects, including in English and mathematics, in each of the key stages.
- The proportion of pupils entered for externally accredited courses has increased rapidly over the three years since the school opened. The vast majority of pupils currently in Year 11 are on track to achieve their targets in at least five different courses. This helps prepare them well for the next steps in their education and training.
- Pupils' progress is strongest in English and mathematics. This supports their good progress in other subject areas. The school's use of additional funding is effective.

Disadvantaged pupils make broadly the same progress as other pupils in the school. Pupils make effective use of their literacy and numeracy skills in other subject areas, and this contributes to the progress they make.

- The most able pupils are making very strong progress, particularly in English and mathematics. In key stage 4, the most able pupils are working confidently towards examination accreditation at GCSE. All pupils in key stage 4 are on track to achieve success in five or more accredited courses.
- Work in pupils' books confirms that, despite some variation, pupils make good progress overall in key stage 3. The work produced by pupils in the primary phase shows that their progress is improving quickly, as sharper leadership and planning, especially in core subjects, has begun to impact on pupils' learning.
- Additional support to help pupils fill in gaps in their reading and phonics knowledge is effective. Pupils begin to read with greater confidence and accuracy. The books they read with staff, for example in upper key stage 2, interest them and encourage them to read more.
- Pupils develop their writing skills well in English lessons. Pupils use effective modelling and guidance to practise writing, for example exploring their responses to stories such as 'Skellig'. However, across a wider range of subjects, there are not enough opportunities to practice and cement their skills.
- Pupils' learning through therapeutic interventions in subjects such as art, music and design technology is effective. Pupils produce high-quality work, which responds to their interests and needs from their various starting points.

School details

Unique reference number	142630
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10087480

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	297
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mark Wilson
Executive Principal	Scott Jacques
Telephone number	0113 487 0555
Website	www.springwellacademyleeds.org
Email address	office@springwellacademyleeds.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Springwell Academy provides day education for pupils aged five to 16.
- The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school is part of the Wellspring Academy Trust. The board of trustees oversees the school, using the services of a local governing body.
- Since opening in 2016, the school has grown quickly. It now incorporates four sites across Leeds City. One of the sites caters for pupils of primary school age.
- Almost all pupils come from Leeds. The academy opened as a new school in 2016.
- A very high proportion of pupils come from disadvantaged backgrounds. A very high proportion of pupils come from White British backgrounds.

- The school makes use of a small number of alternative providers of education. Currently, these are LS Ten and The Hunslet Club.

Information about this inspection

- Meetings were held with the executive principal, senior leaders, those responsible for governance of the school, middle leaders, non-teaching staff and teachers and other classroom staff.
- Meetings were held with the chief executive officer and other members of the trust.
- Inspectors talked with groups of pupils, both in meetings and informally around the site, including at breaktime and lunchtime.
- A range of pupils' work was scrutinised. This sample included the work of pupils on different sites and in different key stages. Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in each key stage across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors took into account the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the views expressed to them during telephone calls.
- Inspectors took into account responses from staff to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documents. These included the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching and other quality assurance records and minutes of governors' meetings. Inspectors scrutinised the school's arrangements to safeguard pupils.

Inspection team

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Sara Roe	Ofsted Inspector
Cole Andrew	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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