

# Inspection of Lea Manor High School Performing Arts College

Northwell Drive, Luton, Bedfordshire LU3 3TL

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Inspection dates: 29 June to 1 July 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Inadequate**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Many pupils find it difficult to learn at Lea Manor. Pupils have not achieved well enough at this school for too long. Behaviour is poor and regularly interrupts learning. The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not met. This means they fall further behind. Pupils who are weak readers, including pupils with SEND, are not supported to catch up quickly.

Low and inconsistent expectations of behaviour confuse pupils as to what is acceptable and what is not. Troublesome behaviour in corridors and around the school is a regular occurrence. Many pupils told inspectors they are 'fed up with school.'

Pupils are not confident that staff deal with bullying. For some pupils, school is an uncomfortable place to be because of how they look or behave. Pupils have stopped reporting bullying because they say staff do not listen, are not available or pupils believe 'nothing ever happens' when they speak to an adult.

Pupils receive effective careers guidance. Most pupils go on to further education, training or employment. Pupils have the option to participate in a range of clubs.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders are failing to ensure that pupils receive an acceptable quality of education. Weaknesses in planning for learning and pupils' poor behaviour are not dealt with effectively. This has an impact on the quality of education offered in many subjects.

Leaders are not doing enough to ensure that pupils with SEND, pupils who are learning English as an additional language and pupils who need to catch up with their reading achieve well. Staff do not have the skills they need to teach pupils how to improve their reading.

Leaders do not have a sufficient understanding of the needs of pupils with SEND. Staff are not accurately identifying pupils' specific needs, for example pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs. Support for these pupils is not effective. Staff who support pupils with education, health, and care (EHC) plans do not use the strategies outlined on pupils' plans to help pupils access the curriculum.

Leaders' expectations of how often pupils with SEND attend school are too low. Over time, some pupils with SEND have not attended school regularly, and so they have fallen further behind.

Leaders do not know which pupils are in the early stages of learning English or which pupils cannot read well. Teachers do not know pupils' starting points. This means that significant groups of pupils struggle to access learning because their reading and communication skills are weak. Support for pupils who need to catch up

is not effective. Staff have not had the training they need to help pupils to improve. Leaders are not sure whose responsibility it is to teach pupils to read.

Teachers' planning for pupils' learning is not consistently effective. Some curriculum plans, such as those for physical education (PE), show careful thought about what pupils need to know over time. However, there are wide variations in pupils' experience across subjects. In history, for example, the current Year 9 pupils are studying GCSE history early without a secure grasp of the things they need to know to help them to learn well. There are few opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11 who do not study GCSE religious education (RE) to learn about other religions and cultures.

Pupils do not behave well in too many lessons. Pupils say their peers are 'badly behaved and behaviour in lessons is wild'. While leaders know that teachers apply the behaviour policy inconsistently, they have not taken effective action to address this.

Weaknesses in the recording and monitoring of incidents of bullying have not been resolved. Leaders do not know enough about the different types of bullying occurring or the difference their improvement actions make. Many parents and pupils feel that the school does not take reported incidents of bullying seriously. Over half of the parents responding to the Ofsted survey, Parent View, would not recommend the school. Many believe that pupils are not well behaved.

While a new personal development programme has been introduced, the teaching of protected characteristics has been too little, too late, to make a difference for current pupils. Middle leaders have recently started initiatives such as introducing anti-bullying ambassadors. Pupils benefit from external mentoring in relation to local issues such as gangs. Pupils learn about topics such as online safety and healthy lifestyles.

Over time, governors have not identified the significant failings in the school. They do not check the accuracy of the information leaders give to them. Consequently, they have an overgenerous view of the quality of provision and so are ineffective in holding school leaders to account.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders and governors have not ensured that staff, including the safeguarding team, are appropriately trained. There are many failings. Staff are unsure who they should report concerns to. They are unclear about the signs that might indicate a safeguarding concern.

The local authority has recently completed a review of safeguarding, but leaders have not implemented the actions needed. Safeguarding systems and processes

remain weak. Staff do not have a clear picture of risk for the most vulnerable pupils. Gaps in records show that this group of pupils are not closely monitored.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The school's curriculum is not sufficiently well planned and considered. Plans do not take enough account of pupils' starting points and the order in which pupils need to learn subject content. Leaders should check and ensure that teachers' planning and assessment is consistently effective in helping pupils know more and remember more over time.
- Leaders have left struggling readers to flounder by not identifying their needs and staff do not have the skills to provide appropriate support. Leaders must ensure that they identify pupils who need to catch up with their reading. Training should ensure that staff are confident in helping pupils to improve their reading so that they can access learning in all subjects.
- Leaders do not have the knowledge and understanding to be able to accurately identify the needs of pupils with SEND. Staff are not using the strategies listed in pupils' EHC plans. Therefore, pupils with SEND are not supported to achieve well. Leaders must improve their understanding of the identification processes for pupils with SEND, provide training for staff and make sure they use appropriate strategies for support.
- Leaders have not ensured that all staff are implementing the school's behaviour policy effectively. Too many pupils experience unkindness, prejudiced views, and bullying. Learning is frequently disrupted by poor behaviour. Leaders must ensure that staff are clear about the school's expectations of pupils' behaviour and have the training they need to improve pupils' behaviour rapidly.
- Leaders have not made the school a place where pupils are confident that their concerns will be dealt with effectively. Too many pupils feel they are not listened to and that their problem will not be resolved. Leaders must ensure that pupils have adults to talk to if they are worried, that pupils are listened to, and that all adults deal well with the concerns that are raised.
- Leaders, including governors, are not fulfilling their roles effectively. There are longstanding weaknesses in the quality of provision, staff training and safeguarding which have not been addressed. Leaders and governors need to sharpen their monitoring and evaluation of improvement actions taken and use their findings to steer urgent improvement.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 109709   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Luton  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10175636   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Secondary comprehensive  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Foundation   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 11 to 16   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 1039   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Yvette Roberts   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Gwyneth Gibson   |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.leamanorhighschool.org">www.leamanorhighschool.org</a> |
| <b>Dates of previous inspection</b>        | 21 and 22 February 2018  |

## Information about this school

- Since the previous section 5 inspection, there is a new senior leadership team in place.
- Most governors are new to the school.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- The inspection was carried out following a number of complaints made to Ofsted that raised serious concerns. Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector decided that an inspection of the school should take place to follow up the whole-school issues that were raised. Inspectors sought to establish whether safeguarding is effective and whether leaders are managing behaviour effectively.
- We spoke to members of the governing body, the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority and four alternative provision providers.
- We carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, history and PE. We met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, and reviewed pupils’ work in these subjects and spoke with teachers and pupils.
- In addition to the deep dives, we looked at provision for reading, personal, social, health and economic education, relationships, sex and health education and RE. We looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, reviewed pupils’ work, and spoke with leaders.
- We met with the leader in charge of SEND and looked at documentation for SEND. We observed support for pupils with SEND in lessons and small group sessions.
- We reviewed the school’s information on behaviour, bullying and attendance. We reviewed safeguarding records and spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding arrangements. We held meetings to discuss the leadership of safeguarding.
- We considered the 87 responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View, and the 49 free-text comments. We took into account the 80 responses to Ofsted’s survey for staff. Leaders did not distribute the Ofsted survey for pupils.

## **Inspection team**

|                           |                         |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Liz Smith, lead inspector | Her Majesty’s Inspector |
| Charlie Fordham           | Her Majesty’s Inspector |
| Adrian Lyons              | Her Majesty’s Inspector |
| Richard Kueh              | Her Majesty’s Inspector |

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