

Inspection of Lakelands Academy

Oswestry Road, Ellesmere, Shropshire SY12 0EA

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 January 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils take pride in their school. They appreciate the extra opportunities they have to be active leaders in the school community, as prefects and school councillors, for example. The school has an active school council. Pupils are given the opportunity to make positive changes in the school, such as starting a social group for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT+) pupils.

Pupils understand the values of respect and tolerance. They are aware of different cultures and religions. One pupil summed up views when they said, 'No one should be treated less favourably because they belong to a specific group.'

Most pupils feel safe around school and are well supported by staff. They trust that when bullying happens it is dealt with quickly and effectively. However, a minority of pupils find it difficult to talk to adults about issues that concern them. Pupils say that on a few occasions they have heard homophobic and racist language being used, but say that this is usually challenged.

Leaders have high ambitions for all pupils' learning. They support the pupils to do well in school. Staff prepare pupils well for their future lives. Pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.

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

Leaders have ensured that all subjects at the school receive the priority they deserve. All subjects are equally valued. Faculty leaders have worked hard to sequence the curriculum to help pupils remember, long-term, the knowledge and skills that they need.

However, plans in English are less developed. The leadership of English has been very turbulent. A new leader has been appointed and positive changes are beginning to be made. Key stage 4 pupils receive a well-structured curriculum that is challenging and aspirational. This is not yet the case in key stage 3, as planning does not yet map out the detail of what pupils need to know and remember. Therefore, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Leaders have strengthened the reading curriculum. The English team members have thought carefully about the books that they want pupils to read and study. As a result, pupils read regularly and widely, and weaker readers develop their reading skills.

Staff have good relationships with pupils. Overall, behaviour in and around school is good. In lessons, little learning time is lost when behaviour is managed well. However, this is not the case in a few lessons. Some pupils and staff say that behaviour can be an issue in some lessons. Parents echo this. Staff explained that the systems for managing behaviour are not always clear, and are therefore difficult

to follow. Leaders have given staff training on managing pupils' behaviour but are aware that they need to make systems clearer and more consistent.

The provision for pupils with SEND is strong. Staff are well informed about the needs of these pupils. They are well trained to identify potential difficulties and plan support to ensure pupils achieve well.

The school carefully tailors specific activities to the mental health and social needs of pupils. For example, they design extra-curricular activities that match the pupils' interests and talents. A careers programme is embedded in the personal, social and health education programme. Regular sessions are devoted to the world of work. The school has an up-to-date provider access statement, and meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel supported and valued by leaders. Staff who spoke to inspectors made it clear that the leaders genuinely care about their workload and well-being.

Governors know the school well. There is a balance of experienced and new governors. Governors are skilled in asking the right questions of leaders to ensure the information they receive is accurate. Leaders and governors have begun to work more collaboratively with local schools and external partners.

Parents are mostly positive about the school. However, some say communication with school is an issue. Leaders have worked hard to develop relationships with parents, but know that they need to continue to build on these.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff are appropriately trained to spot the signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. Leaders are raising pupils' and staff's awareness of the risks of peer-on-peer abuse. They are providing additional training for staff. Staff understand their responsibility to report any concern, however small. School records are detailed and organised.

Safeguarding leaders work effectively with a range of external agencies so that pupils get the support they need at the right time. Leaders carefully check that any alternative provisions they use are appropriate and safe for their pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The content of the curriculum in most subjects has been set out clearly for all year groups. However, planning in key stage 3 English does not yet clearly map out the detail of what pupils need to know and remember across the unit of work. Therefore, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Staff should ensure that they carefully map out what pupils need to know and remember across key stage 3 units of work.
- Some staff, pupils and parents shared concerns about inconsistencies in the management of pupils' behaviour in some lessons. Leaders must ensure they implement and clearly communicate effective strategies to ensure behaviour is consistently well managed in all lessons.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

Unique reference number	139102
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10210947
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	559
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Geoff Corfield
Headteacher	Sophy Bellis
Website	www.lakelandsacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Lakelands Academy is a stand-alone academy.
- Shropshire local authority has a specialist resource provision for pupils with SEND based at the school. This is for pupils with communication and interaction needs. There are 23 pupils on roll.
- The school uses three unregistered alternative provision settings. These are attended part time by five pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, and other senior leaders. They also met with five governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, French and drama. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors visited tutor times.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils at informal times of the day. They also met with groups of pupils more formally.
- Through discussion with leaders, pupils and staff, inspectors considered the effectiveness of safeguarding. Inspectors looked at records relating to safeguarding, including pre-employment checks for staff and records of referrals to different agencies.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the staff and pupil surveys. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

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