

Inspection of Lightcliffe Academy

Stoney Lane, Lightcliffe, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX3 8TL

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 March 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

After a period of instability, Lightcliffe Academy is no longer an inadequate school. Pupils' experiences at the school have improved since the previous full inspection. Leaders have a handle on school improvement. However, there remains more to be done.

Leaders are determined to make the school a happy place for all pupils. They want every pupil to feel part of the wider school community. Most pupils enjoy coming to school. They value their lessons and the opportunities to get involved in activities out of lessons. Leaders have been quick to reintroduce school performances and overseas trips following the disruption caused by the pandemic. The support for pupils joining in Year 7 is appreciated by pupils and their parents. Some pupils, however, do not attend often enough.

The behaviour of pupils has improved since the previous inspection. Despite this, not all pupils consistently show respect to each other and to adults in school. Pupils are still largely dependent on the supervision of adults to act appropriately. Incidents of bullying have declined rapidly. Although it still occasionally happens, most pupils are confident that, when they tell staff about any bullying, it is addressed.

The quality of education remains inconsistent. Some lessons are not planned as effectively as they could be. Teachers do not consistently check that pupils have remembered the most important parts of their learning. Some pupils get distracted too easily in lessons. There is also variation in the use of the behaviour policy in lessons.

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

Leaders, supported by those responsible for governance and from the multi-academy trust, have a grasp on the school's improvement priorities. They are aware of what still needs to improve. Following a period of turbulence, leaders are providing much-needed stability. Governors have a more active role in school improvement. Staff say they are better supported by leaders than was previously the case. Most staff are proud to work here. They are keen for pupils' behaviour to continue to improve. Most pupils enjoy attending school, although some do not attend regularly enough. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils.

Leaders have introduced a new structure to lessons, known as the 'LIGHTR' model. This is to ensure that all lessons follow the same routines. Subject leaders have been supported to develop teaching plans to build on this model. In some subjects, including English, the plans are detailed and there is a sensible approach to the way lessons are sequenced. In other subjects, such as science and history, the plans are in the earlier stages of development.

Pupils' experiences in lessons are inconsistent. In some lessons, pupils can recall their prior learning and remember the important content taught previously. In other lessons, pupils are less confident. The use of assessment to identify pupils'

misconceptions and gaps in their knowledge is inconsistent. Teachers do not always use assessments to inform future learning. The needs of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well known. Support for those learning to read fluently is in place. However, leaders do not always check that the support identified for more vulnerable pupils is routinely happening.

Pupils receive appropriate advice and guidance to prepare them for life after school. A programme of careers support has been carefully planned to ensure pupils get help when they need it. Extra-curricular opportunities are available. However, not enough pupils benefit from these. Some Year 11 pupils are able to study an additional, challenging mathematics qualification after school. This opportunity is well planned and implemented. Pupils enjoy attending this session and know how it will support them in life after school.

The school's approach to its 'character development' curriculum is evolving. It is designed to help pupils gain an understanding of the attributes expected of them. A recent focus of this has been on promoting dignity. A large piece of communal artwork is on display in the entrance foyer of the school. This work was created by staff and pupils as part of a project to raise awareness of the protected characteristics, such as sexual orientation, race and disability. Pupils spoke highly of the opportunity this presented to come together and celebrate community cohesion.

Pupils receive other important messages and lessons through assemblies, form time sessions, and in dedicated personal, social, health education (PSHE) lessons. This work is important, as not all pupils demonstrate the qualities expected of them. Some disrespectful comments are heard from pupils. However, leaders address these when they are made aware of them. Some pupils want to know more about how to deal with negative thoughts, anxiety and stress. They want to know about the support available to them.

Leaders have begun to improve communication with parents. Many parents welcome these initiatives. Some, however, still face difficulties getting the help they need. Some parents raised concerns with inspectors about pupils' access to toilet facilities. The main block of toilets is not currently available to pupils during lesson times. This is part of a time-limited strategy leaders have in place to clamp down on unacceptable behaviour. Other toilet facilities are available at all times of the school day.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders responsible for safeguarding have implemented effective systems designed to keep pupils safe. Staff are well trained on the risks pupils face locally and further afield. They know what to do when they have concerns about a pupil. Action is taken promptly, working alongside external agencies when appropriate, to keep pupils safe.

Pupils feel safe at the school. Any issues identified at regular safeguarding audits are addressed promptly. Pupils receive age-appropriate lessons on growing up safely in modern Britain. They value these opportunities.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is variation across the curriculum. The teaching plans in some subjects need further refinement. Assessments are not always used effectively. Leaders do not routinely check that the identified support for pupils with SEND is happening. Leaders should ensure all subjects have robust plans for teaching and assessment in place. They should provide teachers with subject-specific training to help these plans gain momentum.
- Although pupil behaviour has improved, it is often dependent on staff supervision. Some pupils do not behave consistently well. Some use derogatory and/or discriminatory language in the school. Leaders should continue to focus on improving expected standards of behaviour. They should ensure poor behaviour is dealt with consistently by all members of staff, in and out of lessons.
- Over time, some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils. Not attending school means pupils are neither learning nor benefiting from the school's wider support to help prepare for adulthood. Leaders must intensify their efforts to improve attendance, ensuring fewer pupils are persistently absent from school.
- Leaders have identified important issues to be taught through the school's 'character curriculum'. However, some of this learning is not fully embedded. Not all pupils know about the support available to them should they be struggling with their mental health and well-being. Leaders must continue to prioritise the importance of pupils' personal development, offering support to those who need it.
- The school has relaunched its communication policy. Parents now know what they should expect when they contact school. Leaders are proactive in sharing news about learning with parents. There are opportunities for parents to be involved in life at school. However, some parents still face frustrations when raising concerns. Some parents want more information on the progress their child is making. Leaders should continue to develop effective relationships with parents and carers.

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	137036
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10210796
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	1040
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of board	Paul Whitman
Chair of governing body	Peter Laurence
Head of school	Rosalinda Wood-Ives
Executive headteacher	Paul Cooper
Website	www.lightcliffeacademy.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	30 November and 1 December 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- When Lightcliffe Academy was inspected in November 2018, it was judged to require special measures. Subsequently, the school was inspected on five occasions. At the previous monitoring inspection, leaders and managers were judged to be taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.
- Lightcliffe Academy joined the Abbey multi-academy trust on 1 March 2015.
- The school uses a number of alternative providers: Calderdale college; Bradford college; Kirklees college; Whitley AP academy; On trax; Motive8 college.
- Through its careers programme, the school 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 apprenticeship.

Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

This was the third routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) 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 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- Inspectors met the executive headteacher, the head of school and other senior leaders. A meeting was also held with those responsible for governance, including the chair of the governing body. Inspectors also met leaders from the multi-academy trust.
- To evaluate the quality of education, inspectors conducted deep dives in English, science, art, computer science, history and physical education. This involved meeting subject leaders; reviewing subject plans; observing lessons; speaking to teachers; speaking to pupils; and reviewing samples of pupils' work. The school's 'character curriculum' was also reviewed.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead, and reviewed the systems in place to keep pupils safe. The checks that the school makes when appointing new staff were reviewed.
- The inspectors spoke to an extensive number of pupils, both formally and informally. They asked pupils about their experiences of life at the school. A wide range of documentation and records linked to behaviour management were also scrutinised.
- The views of 84 staff and 147 parents were also considered through Ofsted's inspection surveys.

Inspection team

James Duncan, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Martin Featherstone	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Fletcher	Ofsted Inspector
David Mills	Her Majesty's Inspector
Pritiben Patel	Ofsted Inspector
Carl Sugden	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022