

Inspection of Sir Herbert Leon Academy

Fern Grove, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK2 3HQ

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 May 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Some pupils regularly experience bullying, harassment and/or discrimination, and pupils generally lack confidence in how staff deal with bullying. Many pupils choose not to report bullying for fear of recrimination. However, some pupils told inspectors they feel safe at school. They enjoy lessons and many say they value the friendships they have built at the school.

In some lessons, pupils behave well. These lessons are calm and orderly. In most subjects, staff have high expectations for pupils. However, not all lessons are as purposeful as others. In some lessons, disruptive behaviour is tolerated by staff and this disturbs the learning of other pupils. When pupils receive a red card for their disruptive behaviour, they are removed from their lessons for the rest of the day and receive a detention. Many pupils do not believe this system helps them to improve their behaviour.

The school has not prepared pupils sufficiently for life in modern Britain. Leaders have not carefully thought about or implemented a curriculum designed to support pupils' wider personal development.

Leaders do not always handle safeguarding concerns effectively. Some pupils attend alternative provision, but leaders do not have rigorous systems and processes in place to ensure these pupils are safe from potential harm.

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

Leaders have not fulfilled their statutory duties with regard to safeguarding. Leaders have not ensured that the necessary checks on alternative provision have been completed prior to pupils attending. In addition, leaders have not been diligent in checking the attendance of pupils at alternative provision. Pupils attending alternative provision on part-time timetables do not receive the necessary support for their wider personal development. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who have been placed at alternative provision do not receive the additional support they require, since they often do not attend the alternative provision and the school does not diligently follow this up.

Leaders have made progress with curriculum thinking. In some subjects, leaders have designed a curriculum that enables pupils to know and remember more. However, in some subjects, leaders are aware that their curriculum thinking is not thorough enough yet. Teaching is inconsistent across the school. In some subjects, such as English and physical education, teachers carefully sequence the work so that pupils acquire new skills and successfully build on prior knowledge.

Where teaching is successful, the school's approach to assessment is effective. Staff use short activities at the start of lessons to help pupils identify which skills they can and cannot demonstrate. Cleverly designed feedback from assessments identifies

what they need to work on to improve. However, some staff find the feedback process is over-burdensome. Some pupils do not act upon the feedback given by staff, so misconceptions are not addressed.

Provision for pupils with SEND in lessons is too varied. Where provision is strong, teachers use up-to-date individualised plans to help plan the work so that pupils with SEND achieve well. However, some individual plans examined were considerably out of date, so the support these pupils with SEND receive is not timely or ambitious enough.

Pupils study a broad range of subjects in key stage 3. The key stage 4 curriculum is varied, but too few pupils gain qualifications in the English baccalaureate. This is because too few pupils study a modern foreign language. Leaders are aware of this and have plans to attempt to resolve this in the future. Extra tuition is given to pupils who find reading a challenge. Some pupils receive timely help to gain the knowledge and skills they need to become fluent readers. However, leaders have not yet carefully planned long-term support for weaker readers.

Leaders have made some improvements to the behaviour and attendance of some pupils at the school. They have systems in place to monitor behaviour and attendance but have not yet made sufficient improvements in either to ensure that they are consistently good. Pupils told inspectors that the disruptive behaviour of some pupils interrupts their learning on a regular basis. Leaders are not doing enough to improve attendance, especially of those pupils with SEND or who are disadvantaged.

Curriculum thinking in personal, social, health education (PSHE) and relationships and sex education (RSE) is weak. Leaders are aware of this and plan to implement a new curriculum designed to develop pupils' knowledge of PSHE and RSE imminently. Pupils do not learn enough about the importance of respect and tolerance of others. They told inspectors that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender pupils are often subject to discriminatory language. Pupils also feel discriminated against because of their race, although leaders told inspectors they do not feel that this intolerance exists at the school. Staff deliver much of the PSHE and RSE curriculum through assemblies. However, pupils do not feel able to discuss current issues and raise questions in these forums. Careers information, education, advice and guidance for most pupils are more effective. Many pupils told inspectors they have ambitious plans for the next steps of their education.

The school has experienced significant turbulence in leadership at all levels. Leaders at the school have not ensured that systems and processes are robust. Likewise, trust leaders have not assured themselves that quality assurance processes have been followed correctly. Leaders who have been appointed recently have tried to address some of the many issues faced by the school. However, there are still areas where leaders have not acted swiftly enough to make the necessary improvements. Leaders prioritise the well-being of staff. Most of the staff at this school feel that the school is now well led. Staff feel supported by leaders when dealing with incidents of

poor behaviour. They feel that their workload is taken into account when new policies and procedures are designed and implemented.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders have not acted diligently to keep the most vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND, safe. They have failed to follow their own policy or statutory guidance with regard to pupils who attend alternative provision. Leaders have failed to carry out the necessary checks on alternative provision prior to pupils from the school attending. They do not diligently keep track of the pupils attending alternative provision.

Safeguarding records have not been precisely kept. Leaders have not systematically maintained a detailed account of how concerns are followed up. Records lack detail of the actions taken, the decisions made, and the outcomes of serious incidents shared with them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not followed their own policy or statutory guidance with regard to the checks made on alternative provision prior to pupils attending. Leaders do not systematically check that pupils attending alternative provision are present or safe. This means that pupils may be at risk of harm. Leaders must take urgent action to ensure that:
 - all the necessary checks are made on alternative provision prior to pupils from this school attending an alternative setting
 - all designated safeguarding leaders must follow the school policy, local authority arrangements and statutory guidance for assessing and reporting safeguarding actions
 - safeguarding records should be improved so that they are accurate and help to keep pupils safe
 - those responsible for governance develop effective systems to check statutory systems and processes are in place to safeguard pupils.
- Leaders have not developed a systematic approach to catering for pupils' wider development. As a result, pupils are not prepared for life in modern Britain. Leaders must ensure there is a comprehensive programme of PSHE and RSE developed and implemented as soon as possible.
- Leaders have made improvements in many areas of the curriculum. However, in some subjects, leaders have not yet developed their curriculum thinking and implementation is weak in some areas. This leads to ineffective teaching of the intended curriculum and disrupted learning environments in some subjects.

Leaders must ensure that subject leaders receive appropriate support to further develop curriculum thinking and implementation.

- Leaders have not done enough to ensure that discrimination, harassment and bullying among pupils is addressed. As a result, there is a culture of non-reporting and tolerance of these behaviours among pupils. Leaders must challenge discrimination and harassment and take decisive action to prevent bullying and engender a culture that does not tolerate bullying.

Having considered the evidence, I strongly recommend that leaders and those responsible for governance do not seek to appoint early career teachers.

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	138439
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10227461
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	538
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Hall
Headteacher	Jonathan Harris
Website	www.shlacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	12 and 13 September 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Sir Herbert Leon Academy is a smaller than average secondary school. The school has commenced the process of closing its provision for sixth form and currently has no registered pupils in its sixth form.
- The school is part of the Academies Enterprise Trust.
- The school uses three registered and one unregistered alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 11 with information about approved technical educational qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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.

- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, music and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead and other safeguarding leaders. They reviewed documentation related to safeguarding. The spoke to staff about how they keep children safe and spoke to pupils about their experiences.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders of the school, members of staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector also met with a representative of the trust's chief executive officer, the trust's director of standards and quality and the trust's regional director, who is the interim chair of the governing body. The lead inspector also reviewed documentation relating to governance.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator, spoke to pupils with SEND, reviewed plans to support these pupils and visited lessons to see how these pupils are supported to learn.
- Inspectors considered 18 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including five free-text comments. Inspectors also took account of 36 responses to the staff survey and there were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Linda Culling, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jane Cartwright	Ofsted Inspector
Julia Mortimore	Ofsted Inspector

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