

# Inspection of Lord Lawson of Beamish Academy

Birtley Lane, Birtley, Chester-le-Street, County Durham DH3 2LP

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Inspection dates: 15 and 16 November 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

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

Leaders have focused on making sure they are taking the right decisions at the right time. Pupils receive a good standard of education. Staff and pupils welcome the positive changes that leaders have made. Many parents are similarly enthused by the improvements that they see.

Leaders and staff share the same high expectations for all pupils. Pupils' attendance is improving. Leaders have established strong routines to encourage good behaviour. There has been a marked improvement in pupils' behaviour as a result. Bullying is rare. Pupils know that there is always a trusted adult that they can speak to if they have any concerns. Pupils are confident that staff will help them with any issues that may arise.

Leaders ensure that pupils can access a varied programme of extra-curricular activities and wider opportunities. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop leadership skills. Some pupils are librarians, while others are well-being ambassadors. Sixth-form students are looking forward to being trained as mental health mentors and helping younger pupils with any anxieties that they may have. A newly formed 'Pride' group promotes tolerance and acceptance in this inclusive school that celebrates difference.

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

Leaders have ensured that there is an ambitious curriculum in place in all subjects. They have thought carefully about the important information that they want pupils to learn. This 'fundamental knowledge' builds on what pupils have learned before. There is a consistent approach to the structure of lessons across school. As a result, pupils know what is expected of them. Teachers quickly identify where pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Teaching staff work together to help pupils to catch up.

Many pupils achieve well and are ready for their next steps. In a few subjects, additional support enables some disadvantaged pupils to make significant gains in their knowledge. However, there is not a consistent approach in place. As a result, some disadvantaged pupils do not achieve well enough in all subjects.

Leaders are keen to develop a love of reading across school for all pupils. They swiftly identify pupils who struggle to read fluently. Trained staff help these pupils through additional reading sessions. As a result, pupils quickly learn to read. Older pupils enjoy their role as reading ambassadors. They develop strong bonds with younger pupils as they help them with their reading.

Leaders ensure that teaching staff have the knowledge to help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders provide teaching staff with clear information about how to help pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants work together to ensure that pupils with SEND are well supported in lessons. Leaders

know that some pupils are anxious and that they struggle with their social, emotional and mental health. Trained staff help these pupils and arrange additional support for them.

Leaders have worked hard to improve behaviour and attendance. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is calm and lessons are rarely disrupted. Corridors can be busy at social times and between lessons, and staff occasionally need to remind some pupils to be sensible. The majority of pupils quickly comply. Most pupils are polite and respectful to staff and to each other.

Students in the sixth form speak eloquently and proudly of their school. They value the support that they receive in preparing for their future destinations. Students receive regular information about the opportunities for different careers. This, together with work experience placements, helps students to decide their next steps.

Leaders make sure that all pupils, including those in the sixth form, receive weekly personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons. This is beginning to address previous gaps in this aspect of the curriculum. Pupils learn about different careers in PSHE and in individual subjects. Leaders widen pupils' understanding of the world around them through trips, visits, assemblies and tutorial periods.

Leaders, including governors, have an accurate understanding of the strengths of their school and where it needs to further improve. Governors carefully check that leaders are taking the right decisions for the best interests of pupils. Governors regularly speak with staff and pupils to get the information that they need to hold school leaders to account. Staff are well supported by leaders. Teaching staff benefit from the training they receive. They are excited to be part of the school's ongoing improvements.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have developed a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff receive regular training and updates about important safeguarding messages. Staff know the safeguarding risks that pupils may face and the signs that suggest pupils may be at risk of harm. Staff promptly report any concerns that they have about pupils' safety and well-being. Leaders follow these up and make swift referrals to wider safeguarding partners. As a result, pupils are kept safe.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. Leaders have ensured that pupils receive timely information about important principles, such as consent in healthy relationships. Staff present this information in age-appropriate ways.

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

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

- There has not been a sufficiently strategic approach to ensuring that pupils from a disadvantaged background have the support that they need. As a result, some pupils do not achieve well enough. Leaders and governors must ensure that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, receive the support they need to get the most from their education.

## 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.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137942
<b>Local authority</b>	Gateshead
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241508
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1344
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Guy Currey
<b>Principal</b>	Andrew Fowler
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.lordlawson.academy">www.lordlawson.academy</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 October 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new principal has taken up post. Two new deputy principals have been appointed. A new chair of the governing body is in place.
- The school uses four alternative providers. Two of these providers are registered.
- 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 apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 senior leaders. They met members of the governing body, including the chair. Inspectors held meetings with leaders with responsibility for behaviour and attendance, pastoral support, SEND, personal development,

careers and the sixth form. They also met wider support staff. Inspectors spoke with teachers who are at the early stages of their teaching career.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, geography and technology. 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 also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in PSHE and in reading. An inspector listened to pupils read. Inspectors visited lessons in wider subjects.
- Inspectors scrutinised important safeguarding records and policies. They spoke with staff about how they keep pupils safe.
- The views of parents were considered through the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and through telephone conversations held with some parents. The views of pupils were considered through responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, as well as through meetings held with pupils.
- The views of staff were considered through meetings held with staff and from the responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

Eleanor Belfield, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Moira Banks	Ofsted Inspector
Kieran McGrane	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Fletcher	Ofsted Inspector
Joanne Owens	Ofsted Inspector

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