

Inspection of Lancaster Academy

Knighton Lane East, Leicester, Leicestershire LE2 6FU

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The principal of this school is Anna Fisher. This school is part of Learning without Limits Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, John Henrys, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jeffrey Knight.

What is it like to attend this school?

Lancaster Academy is a welcoming, inclusive school. The school embraces the diversity of its pupils. Many pupils join at different points of the school year and are new to this country. Some have experienced significant challenges prior to arriving at this school. Whenever they join, each new pupil gets the help they need to settle in swiftly. Pupils from different backgrounds and cultures, and with a range of talents and needs, form a harmonious community. Pupils treat each other respectfully. The mutually respectful relationships between staff and pupils are evident in this caring school.

The school has high expectations for pupils, and of how pupils should behave. There are clear and consistent routines for each part of the school day, which help pupils to know what the school expects.

Pupils are happy at this school. They learn that bullying is not acceptable, and it is rare. Pupils have confidence that any incidents of bullying will be dealt with effectively. Pupils have trust in their teachers. They are happy to talk to them about any worries that they might have. As a result, pupils feel safe and are safe. The school makes sure that pupils are taught wider life skills. For example, there are workshops in place to help the boys grow into responsible and kind young men.

The 'READY' values are alive in this school. Pupils are very proud of their diverse community. They celebrate each other's faiths and cultures. For example, they enjoy 'Cultural Days', wearing their cultural dress and learning about different cultures.

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

This school is ambitious for all pupils. Leaders ensure that all pupils study a wide range of appropriate subjects and take qualifications that prepare them for their next steps in education. The well-designed and well-delivered curriculum is helping pupils throughout the school to make progress. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. Lessons follow consistent routines. Staff assess pupils' work regularly. However, the curriculum is not yet implemented as effectively as it could be in some subjects. Sometimes, teachers move on too quickly. This means any gaps or misconceptions in pupils' knowledge and understanding are not always addressed.

The school acknowledges that many pupils and their families face wider challenges in everyday life. The school creates a culture of aspiration and shared success, for example through 'ambassador awards'. Pupils are proud of their achievements.

The school experiences high pupil mobility. Staff pay close attention to removing any barriers to success that pupils may experience. For example, pupils who are at the earliest stages of learning English learn the curriculum through the 'Education and Employability' pathway. This offers pupils a highly supportive environment. Their learning and pastoral needs are carefully assessed. The 'Transition Hub' is providing valuable support for pupils who find it difficult to succeed in the main school. The

curriculum is skilfully adapted to meet these pupils' needs. Pupils are guided to study the qualifications that will enable them to successfully take their next steps. In taking this individualised approach, some pupils take fewer qualifications than their peers. This, combined with the high mobility of pupils, impacts on the school's published outcomes.

The school identifies accurately the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff receive training to identify pupils' SEND needs and any barriers to learning. This means that pupils with SEND get the support they need to learn well.

The school has prioritised reading. For example, staff use phonics programmes appropriately to teach pupils to decode words. This helps pupils to improve their reading and to access the rest of the curriculum. The school has carefully chosen engaging texts to read with pupils to foster their love of reading. As a result, pupils enjoy reading.

The school encourages and supports pupils to attend school regularly. Staff work well together to help those pupils who are frequently absent from school. However, some pupils still do not attend school as often as they should. This means they miss essential learning and the wider opportunities this school provides.

The school has a well-planned personal development and careers curriculum. This broadens and enriches pupils' experiences and develops their employability skills. Staff teach pupils about healthy relationships at an age-appropriate level. Pupils understand relevant issues, such as knife crime and county lines. They participate in a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, such as fencing, dodge ball, drama club, and coding club. Pupils take on leadership and ambassador roles in school.

Leaders at all levels have improved the school since the previous inspection. Trustees and governors have a strong commitment to the school. They and school leaders have an aligned vision for ongoing improvement.

Staff are happy and proud to work at this school, and they feel well supported. They are confident that leaders consider their workload with care.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not yet implemented as effectively as it could be in a few subjects. Occasionally, teachers move on too quickly and teaching activities do not help pupils gain the planned knowledge and skills as well as they could. Consequently, any gaps or misconceptions in pupils' knowledge and

understanding are not always addressed, and some pupils are unable to apply what they have learned accurately and independently. The school should continue to develop teachers' pedagogical skills so that all pupils embed knowledge securely and can apply it fluently, leading to improved outcomes.

- Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough, particularly those pupils with SEND or those who are disadvantaged. Therefore, these pupils miss out on accessing the curriculum, including some essential learning. This hinders their progress through subject curriculums. The school should ensure that strategies to reduce absence can be sustained over a long enough period to change the culture of attendance for pupils.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	143857
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10298510
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1011
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jeffrey Knight
CEO of the trust	John Henrys
Headteacher	Anna Fisher
Website	www.lancaster.leicester.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 February 2020 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Learning without Limits Academy Trust.
- The school experiences a very high mobility of pupils. A large proportion of pupils move into, and leave, the school during the school year: 42% of the school's pupils were mobile last academic year.
- The chair of governors started in their role in September 2021.
- The school has a high proportion of pupils whose first language is not English.
- The school currently uses one registered and eight unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- 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 of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector spoke to the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive of the trust, and representatives of the local governing body.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors also reviewed the school's personal development offer.
- Inspectors took note of the responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and Ofsted's staff survey and the school's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Anne Maingay, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Julie Sheppard	Ofsted Inspector
Roxanne Fearn-Davies	His Majesty's Inspector
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