

Inspection of The Lacon Childe School

Love Lane, Cleobury Mortimer, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY14 8PE

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 June 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

The acting headteacher of this school is Rachel Croxton-Broome. This school is part of Shropshire Gateway Educational Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Katie Jones, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Leonora Castledine.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils get many opportunities at Lacon Childe school. They take part in clubs and activities. Most pupils participate in the popular house competition. Personal development for pupils is planned well. Teachers encourage pupils to get involved in a range of activities. This helps to ensure they are ready for life after school. Pupils feel safe and they value the care they receive from their teachers. Bullying is rare. When it happens, teachers deal with it well.

There have been significant changes in leadership and teaching. Expectations of behaviour have not been consistent. A minority of pupils have disrupted the learning of others. Not all teachers successfully manage behaviour in lessons. This means some lessons do not run smoothly. Many pupils are frustrated by this. New leaders have made changes that have begun to improve behaviour. Too many pupils are absent from school. This means they miss out on vital learning and opportunities.

The school is ambitious for pupils to do well. Staff know pupils as individuals. The curriculum is well planned. Teachers are clear about what pupils need to understand. However, disadvantaged pupils are not always given the help they need to succeed.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum. There is a broad range of subjects. Subject leaders have devised clear plans which explain what pupils need to learn. Teachers have good subject knowledge. However, teachers do not always check that all pupils have understood what they have learned. Some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. This is particularly true for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have identified improving this as a priority.

The school is committed to ensuring that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully involved in school life. Teaching assistants provide good one-to-one support for pupils in many lessons. Teachers are given individual guidance on how they can specifically help each pupil. However, not all teachers follow these plans consistently. This means that some pupils with SEND do not progress as well as they should.

Most pupils behave well. There is an orderly and calm conduct around the school site. However, a minority of pupils frequently disrupt lessons. Teachers do not manage behaviour consistently. The school has recently established new pastoral support systems. These have helped pupils who struggle with managing their behaviour. Newly appointed leaders have re-emphasised the importance of good behaviour. This has led to an improvement. This positive change has been noticed by pupils.

There is a sharp focus on pupils who have fallen behind with reading. Support is rigorous and well structured. Struggling readers are helped to improve. The school's

approach to promoting wider reading for all pupils is not fully developed. This means that some pupils do not see the value in reading for pleasure.

Too many pupils miss school. The school has recently employed a family support worker. This has helped some pupils to attend more regularly. However, progress in improving attendance is too slow.

Pupils have many opportunities for personal development. They learn about health and well-being, living in the wider world and relationships. There are a wide range of clubs and societies, including, for example, chess and mock trial. Many pupils get involved with these. There are opportunities for participating and competing in a wide range of sports. Pupils learn about how Cleobury Mortimer is different from other parts of the country. Pupils understand fundamental British values. Teachers emphasise the importance of developing pupils' moral and cultural values.

The careers programme is well structured in all years. Disadvantaged pupils receive enhanced support for their future plans. Pupils build an understanding of the world of work. Pupils know the different options they have for their lives after they leave school.

There has been a period of turbulence in leadership. Trustees have brought in help from an interim executive headteacher from another trust. This has stabilised the situation. Staff feel their well-being is well supported. Leaders have identified areas for improvement. However, the strategy to support disadvantaged pupils is not working well. Governors and trustees do not have the information they need to support and challenge the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff do not apply the behaviour policy consistently and a minority of pupils too frequently distract others and are defiant towards their teachers. This disrupts learning for other pupils. The school must ensure that all staff implement the agreed behaviour strategies effectively so that all pupils can learn the intended curriculum.
- Not all teachers use assessment well in order to identify what pupils do not fully understand and remember. As a result, gaps in pupils' understanding are not addressed and misconceptions remain. This particularly affects disadvantaged pupils. The school must train teachers to ensure that all use assessment appropriately to enable all pupils to achieve well across the curriculum.
- Some pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should. As a result, they miss out on vital learning and the opportunity to benefit from the school's

personal development provision. The school should implement strategies to ensure pupils come to school as often as possible.

- Teachers do not consistently use information about the specific needs of pupils with SEND in order to adapt learning. This means these pupils do not make as much progress as they should. The school must ensure that all staff routinely meet the needs of pupils in lessons.
- The school's strategy to support disadvantaged pupils is not working well. Leaders and teachers do not clearly understand what they should do to help these pupils. There is not enough evaluation about what works well and what does not. This means that too many disadvantaged pupils do not get the most out of school. The school must ensure that the pupil premium strategy clearly sets out what needs to be done and how the success of each approach will be evaluated.

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 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	141451
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10322868
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	540
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Leonora Castledine
Acting Headteacher	Rachel Croxton-Broome
Website	www.lacon-childe.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	7 and 8 March 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Lacon Childe is a smaller-than-average secondary school located in a rural area.
- The headteacher has been in post since May 2024, having previously been deputy headteacher.
- The school is part of the Shropshire Gateway Educational Trust.
- The school is currently being supported by an executive headteacher from the Four Stones Academy Trust.
- There is a resourced SEND hub located at the school for up to 20 pupils.
- The school uses three registered alternative provisions and one unregistered alternative provision.
- 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.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors had discussions with the trust chief executive officer, the executive headteacher and the headteacher.
- Inspectors spoke with the chair of trustees and members of the trust board and with local governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in science, history, art, physical education and religious studies. Inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with pupils in different year groups, both formally and informally and also observed their behaviour around the school site and in lessons.
- Inspectors visited an unregistered alternative provision that the school uses.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and the results of Ofsted's staff survey.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive safeguarding culture that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's analysis of attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors reviewed the reading curriculum and discussed the provision with leaders, as well as hearing pupils read.

Inspection team

Thomas Walton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sukhbir Farar	Ofsted Inspector
Patrick Amieli	Ofsted Inspector

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