

# Inspection of Sir Herbert Leon Academy

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

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Inspection dates: 8 and 9 October 2024

The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Inadequate

The principal of this school is Emma Jordan. This school is part of LIFT Schools Multi-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, Rebecca Boomer-Clark, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Hall. There is also an executive principal, Nabila Jiwa, who is responsible for this school and one other.

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

Pupils rightly recognise how much the school has improved. They explain how the culture has completely changed to one where they are expected to achieve the best they can. The school's values of determination, respect, ambition and kindness are evident in pupils' conduct. Pupils appreciate the higher standards of behaviour across the school. They enjoy learning and work with focus and purpose. This helps them to achieve well. Improvements to the curriculum mean that current pupils are achieving stronger outcomes than previous cohorts.

The school promotes a strong and close community. Pupils feel they are known well by their tutors and wider staff. This gives them confidence to share any worries and know they will be supported. They learn about the different cultures in the school through events like 'culture week'. This builds their understanding of others, and pupils view differences as a strength. Around the school, this helps friendships to flourish, regardless of background.

Pupils contribute positively to the school community. Through different leadership roles and the school council, pupils put forward their ideas for changes in the school. Pupils benefit from wider opportunities, including clubs and trips. Many regularly represent the school in sporting fixtures and are proud of their successes.

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

There has been considerable work to improve the school's curriculum since the previous inspection. These changes mean that most pupils are now learning well. They are achieving better than the 2023 published examination data suggests. The curriculum is broad and ambitious. Across the curriculum, important knowledge is arranged so that it builds pupils' knowledge and understanding. This includes the regular revisiting of earlier learning to help pupils recall important knowledge. This is not routinely the case in a few subjects. As a result, some pupils struggle to remember the key knowledge they have learned before. The number of pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate qualification is low. The school is aiming to increase the number of pupils studying a modern foreign language. It is taking appropriate action to address this.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They draw on this to explain new ideas clearly. Most teachers check and correct errors in pupils' understanding well. They know the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers use specific strategies to support the learning of pupils with SEND effectively.

The school promotes a love of reading. Across the curriculum, pupils read regularly. They encounter a diverse range of texts in lessons and during tutor times. The school checks how well all pupils can read. Any pupils who struggle with reading have extra sessions so that they catch up quickly.

Behaviour around the school is calm and orderly. Pupils know the rules and are clear about the boundaries. Staff uphold the school's high expectations. They consistently apply

the school's behaviour routines. These support pupils to learn well. In cases where pupils' behaviour is not meeting expectations, prompt action is taken. This includes supporting pupils in learning how they can manage their behaviour better in future.

The school takes prompt and robust action to address absences from school. However, there remains a significant number of pupils who miss too much school. These pupils do not benefit fully from the school's high expectations so they do not make the progress they could through the planned curriculum. The school's approach to ensuring that pupils close the gaps in their knowledge is not yet consistently followed. This affects how well some pupils achieve.

The personal, social and health education curriculum is comprehensive. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online. Through this curriculum, pupils explore different issues, attitudes and emerging risks in society. This helps pupils develop informed opinions. Pupils value the careers programme. This develops their understanding of different study options and employment opportunities. It helps them to be ready for life beyond school.

The school has achieved and sustained considerable improvement. It scrutinises the impact of changes and acts robustly to identify further ways to improve pupils' achievement. The trust and standards board provide challenge and, where needed, targeted support. Staff appreciate efforts to keep their work manageable. This helps them to focus their efforts on helping pupils to learn.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- In a few subjects, teachers do not always carefully check how well pupils understand new knowledge or remember important earlier learning. This means some pupils can continue to have gaps in their understanding. The school needs to ensure that across all subjects, teachers routinely identify and re-explain knowledge so that pupils develop a strong understanding over time.
- A significant number of pupils are absent too often. This means that they miss out on key learning and personal development opportunities. They do not achieve as well as their peers. The school should ensure that the strategy to help these pupils catch up on any missed learning is followed consistently well.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138439
<b>Local authority</b>	Milton Keynes
<b>Inspection number</b>	10321958
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	652
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	David Hall
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Rebecca Boomer-Clark
<b>Principal</b>	Nabila Jiwa (Executive Principal) Emma Jordan (Principal).
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.shlacademy.org">www.shlacademy.org</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	8 and 9 November 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the LIFT Schools Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school currently uses one registered and one unregistered alternative provision.
- A daily breakfast club is overseen by the school.
- 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given

an overall effectiveness grade.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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.
- The inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the acting principal, the vice-principal, the assistant principals, the inclusion lead, curriculum leaders and teachers. The lead inspector met with representatives from the interim standards board and multi-academy trust, including the chief executive officer.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, computing, 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 inspectors also looked at the curriculum, met with pupils and looked at their work in business studies and geography.
- The inspectors observed breaktime and lunchtime activities.
- 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.
- The inspectors considered the responses to the staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- The inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and the additional free-text responses. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the school gate.

### **Inspection team**

Phillip Blagg, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Hanlon

Ofsted Inspector

Ian Cooksey

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Marieke Forster

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