

John Smeaton Academy

Smeaton Approach, Barwick Road, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS15 8TA

Inspection dates

13–14 December 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The progress pupils make in the school is inconsistent and not good across a range of subjects, including mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is variable and does not meet the needs of all groups of pupils. Expectations of what pupils should produce are not consistently high enough.
- Work set for pupils, particularly middle-ability pupils, is not always challenging enough to ensure that they make good progress.
- Absence and exclusions for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well above average. Consequently, personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement.
- Over time, senior leaders and middle leaders have not been diligent in checking pupils' work, including the progress of those in off-site and alternative provision.
- Teaching in the sixth form is not consistently good across a wide range of subjects. As a result, students' progress in the sixth form is as expected and not strong enough to be good.
- Over time, senior leaders have been too generous when reporting the performance of the school to governors. Consequently, governors have not held leaders rigorously to account for their actions.

The school has the following strengths

- New leaders have quickly identified the areas they need to develop and teaching is improving. Leaders have strong capacity to improve the school further.
- Pupils say they feel safe and enjoy their time at the school. They have a clear understanding of what makes a good citizen in modern Britain.
- Governors are developing a better understanding of how well the school is doing. They are ambitious for pupils and are determined to challenge leaders to make rapid improvements.
- Pupils, and students in the sixth form, are polite, courteous and proud of the school. They recognise the school is improving.
- Pupils are given high-quality careers advice that is helping them to raise their aspirations.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, to enable all groups of pupils to achieve well, by:
 - setting challenging work for pupils, particularly middle-ability pupils, to help them make good progress
 - expecting pupils to present high-quality work to deepen their knowledge and understanding
 - strengthening pupils' spelling and grammar across a wide range of subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching in the sixth form to good so that students make good progress.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare to good, for all groups of pupils, by quickly:
 - increasing pupils' attendance to at least average
 - reducing the proportion of pupils regularly absent to average or below average
 - reducing the proportion of pupils excluded to average or below average.
- Increase the impact of leaders, managers and governors by ensuring that:
 - teaching improves to good in a wide range of subjects, particularly in mathematics
 - senior leaders and subject leaders check pupils' progress thoroughly, including those pupils at off-site and alternative provision
 - subject leaders rigorously check that homework is being used effectively to consolidate learning and prepare pupils for work to come
 - self-evaluation accurately informs governors of the performance of the school
 - additional government funding leads to good outcomes and improved personal development, behaviour and welfare for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Over time, leaders and managers have not made sure that all groups of pupils achieve as well as they should. They have not made sure that the quality of teaching is consistently good and that pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare is good.
- Leaders have been over-generous in assessing the work of the school and have not kept a close eye on the quality of teaching and the achievement of all groups of pupils. Middle leaders have not checked pupils' work well enough to make sure that good progress is being made and that consistently high quality teaching is taking place.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and or/disabilities have not made good progress over time. Leaders have not checked the impact of additional funding for these pupils in a systematic way to ensure that attendance, behaviour and progress is good for these pupils.
- New leaders are helping the school to improve. The interim headteacher has made sure that all staff know the main priorities for the school and weaknesses are being tackled. There is a clear understanding of the school's performance and effective action is being taken to improve the school. Additional support is being provided for middle leaders to quickly strengthen their skills. As a result, there are signs that progress is improving and this is especially clear in English.
- The new leadership is aware that parents have mixed views about the work of the school. Some parents are very confident in the work of the school and others less so. Leaders are beginning to address some of the concerns being raised by parents and consider reasonable adjustments in practice to meet the needs of pupils. Pupils and students in the sixth form indicated that the school's reputation in the community is improving.
- Performance management for teachers identifies appropriate professional development to strengthen teaching. However, teaching is currently inconsistent. Recently, 'coaching', using best practice within the school and the Rodillian Multi-Academy Trust, has been supporting improvement in teaching and middle leadership.
- Newly qualified teachers are well supported at this school. The executive headteacher said that recruiting teachers and leaders to the school was not a problem.
- Over time, the curriculum has not helped pupils to achieve well. The current curriculum is better designed to support better outcomes. For example, all students in key stage 4 follow appropriate courses in science. Leaders check students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development across all subjects and it is developing effectively.
- The curriculum provides good experiences to develop a good understanding of life in modern Britain. Additional support is provided to help pupils catch up or extend their studies. Extra activities are available for pupils to engage in but some would like more.
- Year 7 catch-up funding (government funding for those entering secondary school with below average standards in English and mathematics) is used effectively but its impact has not been checked thoroughly, as is the case with the pupil premium.

- The partnership between United Learning and the Rodillian multi-academy trust has provided a range of support, from both organisations, to help improve the school. Over time, the partnership has not ensured that the overall effectiveness of the school is good, although improvements have occurred. Since September 2016, the Rodillian Multi-Academy Trust has been given greater strategic influence in supporting the school. This has helped to increase the rate of improvement across the school.

Governance of the school

- Over time, governors have challenged leaders about how the school is improving. However, they have not had sufficient information to hold senior leaders to account to challenge over-optimistic reporting of results and self-evaluation of the school's performance.
- Governors know how additional government finances have been spent but have not been informed fully of the impact of this spending for disadvantaged pupils and for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. After some time, they have taken appropriate action to ensure that the school is beginning to make reasonable adjustments for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Governors are now better informed and, collectively, have a strong set of skills to help the school improve. Governors are clear about how pupils are achieving in comparison to national information. They are clear about the link between teacher performance and pay and have supported leaders when required. Governors check the finances of the school and make adjustments to ensure that the school is financially viable.
- Governors are clear that they want new leaders to improve pupil outcomes quickly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The single central record includes all the necessary information to ensure that staff and other adults are suitable for working with children and young people.
- The school is vigilant in ensuring that pupils are safe. Staff work well with external agencies to make sure the most vulnerable pupils are kept from harm. Safeguarding files are well kept and record useful information to ensure appropriate and timely intervention should it be necessary. Governors check safeguarding procedures and United Learning completed a comprehensive audit of safeguarding to check that procedures were of high quality.
- Staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding procedures and understand the signs they would look for to keep children safe and identify safeguarding issues. Newly qualified teachers, along with other staff, are trained well and are confident in how to identify safeguarding issues and how to report them.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good and requires improvement. Over time, inconsistencies have prevented pupils achieving well enough as teaching is variable within and across departments.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils complete for their work are not high enough. Pupils are not expected to produce work in sufficient detail to make sure they are deepening their learning and making good progress. The quality of pupils' work can vary within the same class as expectations are not consistently high for all pupils.
- The quality of presentation is variable within classes and across subjects. Pupils are not careful enough in making sure that spelling is correct and English grammar is of the highest standard. This slows their progress and limits the quality of their learning.
- Work set is not consistently challenging pupils, particularly middle-ability pupils, and this leads to reasonable progress but not good progress for pupils. Some pupils need additional challenge to make sure the standard of their work improves quickly as they have experienced weak teaching in the past. The most able pupils are usually challenged well by the work that is set for them.
- Over time, work set for pupils who are supervised in the school's isolation room has not been pitched well enough to help pupils make good progress. Leaders have plans to manage this work better.
- Inspectors' analysis of current pupils' work confirmed that there are good opportunities for pupils to write at length in a range of subjects. Mathematics is used well across subjects such as geography and science.
- Pupils are given time to read and develop an understanding of what is being learned across subjects. Questioning has developed well across the school, drawing out pupils' understanding and enabling teachers to address any misconceptions.
- Inspectors' work analysis showed that subject leaders have not made sure that homework is making a good contribution to pupils' learning as it is not set consistently well across departments. There are times when pupils are not expected to consolidate their knowledge so that they are well prepared to move on to the next stage of learning. Pupils and parents recognise this inconsistency and the benefits of appropriate homework.
- There is good and better teaching in the school with pupils challenged well, where expectations are high and where teachers get the best out of all of the pupils they are teaching. Inspectors noted consistently effective teaching in English and in key stage 4 science.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.

- There are too many pupils absent and regularly absent from the school, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Attendance is well below average and persistent absenteeism is too high. This means that many pupils are not effectively developing the attitudes and habits which are important for their future education, training and employment.
- The school is working hard to strengthen attendance and there are signs of improvement but these are not rapid enough for attendance to be close to average.
- The attendance leader makes sure that pupils are safe and that regular telephone calls are made to check on absentees. Also, the school organises home visits to see parents and bring the pupils into school if they are absent without good reason.
- The school is a calm and orderly place where pupils say they feel safe and enjoy their learning.
- Pupils arrive on time to lessons and to school. They are proud of their school and are smart in their uniform.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe, including when they are using the internet. They say there is very little bullying and inspectors confirmed that incidents of bullying are infrequent. Pupils are very confident that the school deals with bullying effectively should it occur. The school has developed an online computer system for pupils to report any concerns and this is working well.
- There is a comprehensive personal, social and health education programme that is supporting pupils well. Year 7 pupils were keen to tell inspectors how much they enjoy 'resilience' lessons and learning about British values such as tolerance, respect, the rule of law and democracy. The school's work is preparing pupils well to become good citizens. Absentees miss out on this good work which the school is doing.
- The school provides very effective careers guidance and advice right from the start of Year 7 through to Year 11. There are good links with business, commerce and universities that are helping pupils to aspire to greater things than in the past. There are exceptionally few pupils who do not continue in education or employment with training.
- A small proportion of Year 10 and 11 pupils attend the school's off-site provision and work with alternative providers. These pupils are kept safe and engage well with the individual programmes of study prepared for them.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The school has high expectations of behaviour. Some pupils have not responded well enough to these expectations and this has resulted in exclusions from school, even though reducing, remaining well above average. Exclusion is highest for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Around the school, inspectors noted that pupils were well behaved. Pupils were keen to tell inspectors that behaviour had improved considerably although some pupils did not behave well. In class, pupils enjoy working together and concentrate on their work. Very occasionally, a few lost concentration when the work wasn't challenging enough.

- Pupils know what is expected of them both inside and outside the classroom. They told inspectors that most teachers manage behaviour well although there is a small amount of inconsistency in applying the school's policy. Leaders are aware of this and are working with staff to ensure consistency.
- The school environment is well cared for and there is no litter or graffiti.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Variations in the quality of teaching have not helped pupils to make good progress across a range of subjects.
- Overall, progress made by those leaving the school in the past two years has been broadly average although this has not been the case for all groups of pupils.
- Over time, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have made insufficient progress for their learning to be good. Their poor attendance has had a negative impact on their learning and teachers have not met the learning needs of these pupils. Other pupils have made stronger progress as they have greater continuity in their learning because their attendance is average and teachers have met their needs better.
- Published information shows that middle-ability pupils, many disadvantaged, made slow progress. Inspectors checked the work of middle-ability pupils very carefully and found that recent improvements to teaching are helping these pupils make effective progress. The work of disadvantaged pupils shows their progress is improving and differences in their attainment compared with other pupils nationally are beginning to diminish.
- Over time, the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been weak. Leaders did not make sure that pupils' needs were identified clearly and that provision supported these pupils well enough to make effective progress. Recently, leaders have started work to identify pupils' needs more precisely and develop teachers' skills to help these pupils more effectively. Progress is beginning to improve but more has to be done for pupils to make good progress.
- Off-site and alternative provision provides well for the personal development needs of pupils. However, leaders have not made sure that this is balanced by good academic success. Leaders have not checked the work of these pupils well enough to ensure good outcomes. In 2016, a small number did not achieve a GCSE grade in any subject. There is still work to be done to ensure that these pupils make good progress in subjects.
- Most-able pupils make effective progress and achieve the highest GCSE grades in appropriate numbers. In the past, the most able disadvantaged pupils have not achieved well enough, although current work shows this to be improving.
- An analysis of pupils' current work shows that improvements are occurring across the school but progress is still not consistently good. It is clear that English is improving strongly although there is further work to be done in other subjects, especially mathematics, to make sure progress is consistently good.
- School information indicates that pupils' outcomes for the current Year 11 are set to

improve and there is evidence to suggest this might be the case.

- Inspectors noted that the support for pupils eligible for the Year 7 catch-up funding leads to effective progress in English and mathematics.
- The school promotes reading well. Pupils enjoy using computer systems to check how much they understand about what they are reading. Volunteers from business and the community listen regularly to pupils reading. This is encouraging pupils to read widely and enjoy reading.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Since the opening of the academy, students' progress has not been strong enough to be good. Students' progress was poor in 2015 particularly in academic courses. Much has improved since then to ensure that students, including disadvantaged students, make expected progress in both vocational and academic courses but this is still not good.
- Weak teaching has previously led to poor outcomes. Leaders did not set the quality of teaching as a high priority and did not check it well enough. At the start of the previous academic year, leadership was strengthened and there was a strong focus on checking and developing the quality of teaching. Teaching in the sixth form has improved and so have outcomes. However, further work is yet to be done to ensure that both are good.
- Progress for students who re-sit GCSE English and mathematics has improved recently. Students are receiving effective support in these subjects and are making appropriate progress to strengthen their GCSE grades.
- Careers guidance has improved considerably and is a strength in the sixth form. Students are very appreciative of the guidance they are receiving. Increasing numbers of students are entering university and many more are applying. Students entering the sixth form are given good guidance in selecting appropriate courses and are beginning to make better progress than previous years. Almost all students continue in education or employment with training.
- Work experience engages students appropriately in preparing for the world of work. It supports vocational and academic study. University visits and visiting speakers from business and commerce are an integral part in preparing students well for their next steps.
- Students make a positive contribution to the life of the school. For example, they provide academic and pastoral mentoring for key stage 3 pupils as well as engaging in sports leadership. The curriculum offers a wide range of subjects and enrichment activities including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme.
- Leaders have a clear set of plans for improving the sixth form and these are helping students to make better choices, improve attendance and made sure that study programmes are suitable for each student. An increased focus on improving teaching is resulting in higher standards and more students completing their course of study.
- Students are proud to be members of the school and are safe in the school and taught well about how to stay safe. Students respect each other's differences and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

School details

Unique reference number	139282
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10019690

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	899
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dave Johnston
Headteacher	Julian Snape
Telephone number	0113 831 3900
Website	www.johnsmeatonacademy.org.uk
Email address	enquiries@johnsmeatonacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- John Smeaton Academy was opened on 1 January 2014 when it joined United Learning. When its predecessor school, John Smeaton Community College, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to require special measures.
- The academy is an average-sized secondary school.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is well above average. Almost half the pupils are in receipt of the pupil premium.
- Most pupils are White British. There are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have support for special educational needs and/or disabilities is average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11. Also, the school meets the minimum interim standards for sixth forms.
- The school uses its own off-site provision, St Gregory's at Swarcliffe Community Centre, and two alternative providers: OIL and Achieve & Aspire.
- The executive headteacher of the school is also the executive headteacher of Rodillian Multi-Academy Trust and a national leader of education. United Learning brokered a partnership with Rodillian Multi-Academy Trust from 1 September 2014 to support John Smeaton Academy.
- There have been significant changes in staffing and leadership since the opening of the academy. An interim headteacher was appointed on 1 November 2016. Prior to that, new deputy headteachers and subject leaders were appointed.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of teaching and learning in parts of lessons, with ten sessions jointly observed with leaders.
- Throughout the two days of the inspection, inspectors spoke with pupils, both individually and in groups, about learning and safety.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils' work in lessons and analysed samples of work in pupils' books.
- An inspector held a meeting with the chair of the local governing body and three other governors. The lead inspector met with the regional director of United Learning and the director of secondary academies (north).
- Inspectors also held meetings with senior leaders and other staff.
- Inspectors looked at the school's review of its own performance, its development and improvement plan, a number of key school policies and the minutes of governing body meetings. They considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors analysed 25 responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) and 41 responses to the staff questionnaire. Also, inspectors analysed school questionnaires completed by parents.

Inspection team

Jim McGrath, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Stuart Cleary	Ofsted Inspector
Carl Sugden	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Cummings	Ofsted Inspector
James Kilner	Ofsted Inspector

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