

# Leeds West Academy

Intake Lane, Rodley, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS13 1DQ

## Inspection dates

28 February – 1 March 2017

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	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress, including the most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Although standards for current pupils are beginning to rise, leaders did not act quickly enough to address the previous decline in pupils' progress.
- In the past, leaders have been too slow to tackle poor teaching. Therefore, the quality of teaching is inconsistent within subjects.
- Some work is not set at the right level of difficulty. Therefore, the most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently and some pupils find the work too difficult.
- Some subject leaders are less skilled than others in checking and improving teaching and achievement.
- Pupils do not show consistently positive attitudes to learning. They have too few opportunities to develop their thinking, apply their learning and to engage in lessons.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving too slowly. The number of fixed-term exclusions is too high.
- In the sixth form, retention rates have been below average and attendance is too low. Leaders' plans for improvement in the sixth form are not sharply focused enough.
- Governors do not challenge leaders robustly.

### The school has the following strengths

- Following the appointment of the executive principal and new senior leaders, there is a much stronger drive towards school improvement.
- Leaders are realistic about the challenges they face to improve standards rapidly. Their decisive action is addressing weaknesses in teaching.
- Teachers value the increased collaboration with other schools to share good practice. This is having a positive impact on teaching and leadership.
- Pupils behave well around the school and show respect for each other.

## Full report

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

- Improve pupils' progress more rapidly across the school by:
  - using the information available about pupils' starting points to match work to their needs and abilities, particularly the most able
  - paying closer attention to the needs of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities so that these groups make more rapid progress from their starting points
  - sharing the best practice in teaching more widely across the school.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that teachers provide pupils with sufficient challenge across all subjects, including in the sixth form
  - ensuring that all subject leaders have the skills to monitor effectively pupils' progress and the quality of teaching
  - making sure that the school's use of additional funding is used effectively
  - providing pupils with high-quality information and guidance so that they follow appropriate courses in the sixth form or in further education
  - ensuring that governors hold leaders to account for the school's performance robustly.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by:
  - ensuring that disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities attend more regularly
  - improving learners' attendance in the sixth form
  - further reducing the number of fixed-term exclusions
  - ensuring that all pupils show positive attitudes towards their learning.

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.

An external review of governance 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

- In the past, leaders have not addressed the weaknesses in teaching and leadership robustly enough. This has led to a decline in pupils' progress across a range of subjects, which is now being tackled.
- Leaders have not used additional funding effectively enough to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities so these pupils are not making enough progress. The proportion of these pupils who are absent from school or excluded from school is too high. New leaders recognise this and are taking appropriate action which is now making a difference.
- A high turnover of staff has resulted in inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. New approaches are improving teachers' planning, use of questioning and use of assessment. However, leaders know that there is still more work to do to ensure that all pupils make good progress.
- Some subject leaders lack the skills needed to tackle weaknesses in teaching and to provide targeted coaching for their colleagues. Senior leaders are beginning to provide a higher level of support for less-experienced leaders.
- The new executive principal and senior leaders are ambitious in their plans to improve the school rapidly. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They set appropriate priorities and communicate high expectations of both pupils and staff. Most staff said that they welcome the greater clarity about what they need to do to improve pupils' progress.
- Since September, leaders have made good use of external support from the Gorse Academies Trust. The support is well focused on the school's priorities and the quality of leadership and management is improving as a result. Pupils' progress in English and mathematics is also improving.
- Leaders have introduced a more rigorous programme to check pupils' progress and make sure that pupils have the support they need to achieve higher grades in their examinations. This includes more exam practice for pupils and help to revise effectively. External moderation of pupils' work has been increased so that teachers' predictions are more accurate.
- The curriculum has recently been reviewed because leaders recognised that it did not enable all pupils to be successful. It is broad and balanced. The programmes of study have been improved so that they are more challenging, particularly for the most able pupils. The vast majority of pupils now follow an appropriate programme in science.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is used to improve the reading and mathematical skills of pupils who need additional support. However, leaders do not evaluate effectively whether this support is making enough difference to pupils' basic skills. The recently introduced literacy policy is beginning to improve pupils' skills in reading and writing across subjects. However, pupils need further opportunities to practise their numeracy skills in subjects other than mathematics.
- Pupils benefit from a wide variety of visits and extra-curricular activities. These include

several sporting activities, and creative arts such as 'eco textiles', 'jamming and performing' and photography. Enrichment across all subjects, such as 'reading club', 'science with a twist' and 'A Question of Sport' cater for a wide range of pupils' interests. Pupils are also encouraged to take part in community service and volunteer to support others.

- Pupils have access to a well-designed careers programme at key stage 4, with some developing careers guidance at key stage 3. Last year, a higher than average proportion of learners left the sixth form during Year 12 and at the end of Year 12. This suggests that the guidance they received did not help them to choose appropriate courses.
- The school's own surveys show that parents and carers are very supportive of the school. Most parents who responded to Ofsted's survey also agree that their children are happy and well looked after.

### **Governance of the school**

- Until recently, the local accountability board of governors and the academy trust have not been effective in challenging leaders to address the decline in standards. They recognise that they have not held leaders to account for pupils' progress or for teachers' performance.
- Governors are committed to raising standards and, since September, they have taken decisive action to challenge ineffective leadership and to access support from another local trust to improve the quality of teaching.
- Governors are knowledgeable about their duties in relation to safeguarding and they ensure that essential policies are up to date. However, not all governors have received up-to-date safeguarding training.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a positive safeguarding culture in the school because leaders make pupils' safety a high priority. All staff have received up-to-date and appropriate training on safeguarding pupils. They use the school's procedures to ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for.
- The dedicated team of pastoral leaders keep meticulous records and check regularly that those pupils who are at risk of harm are well supported. Leaders access local resources such as 'early help' and have strong working relationships with other agencies to support vulnerable pupils.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Requires improvement**

- Despite a recent drive by leaders to improve the quality of teaching, it remains too variable within subjects. Some teaching in all subjects is well planned and engaging, but some is dull. When learning is not well matched to pupils' starting points, pupils are passive and do not engage fully in learning activities.

- The level of inconsistency in teaching is holding back pupils' progress. For example, teachers' use of questioning is variable across the school. Some teachers use skilful questioning to encourage pupils to think more deeply about the subject and to engage pupils in exploring ideas for themselves. Other teachers accept pupils' first responses without helping them to justify their opinion or to consider alternative viewpoints.
- Some teachers do not plan work which is sufficiently challenging, particularly for the most able pupils. At other times, teachers do not think carefully enough about the resources they provide for pupils who find reading difficult. Sometimes, teachers' instructions are not clear enough and pupils are not given enough examples of the standard of work required.
- In mathematics, pupils are given plenty of opportunities to practise calculations but they are not given enough opportunities to apply their mathematical skills. Therefore, pupils' ability to reason and solve problems is not well developed.
- Pupils' work is well presented and, in most subjects, pupils are given time to reflect on their learning and improve their writing skills. Teachers correct spellings regularly but they do not routinely support pupils to improve punctuation and paragraphing. There are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length across subjects.
- Many teachers know their pupils well and identify ways of supporting individuals to make better progress. However, some groups of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, did not make good progress in the past. This is because some teachers did not plan effectively to help them to overcome barriers in their learning.
- The newly appointed senior leaders in charge of teaching, learning and assessment have a very clear understanding of how to engage learners and to improve pupils' progress. They have begun to insist that pupils have a better understanding of what they are going to learn and why. There are signs that the quality of teaching is improving as a result of leaders' actions.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to make an active contribution to their learning. Some pupils are self-confident when they are given the opportunity to ask and answer questions. However, many pupils are passive and do not develop their understanding effectively.
- The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is well planned. Pupils are well versed in the skills they need to contribute effectively to life in modern Britain. Pupils spoke highly of the school's culture of respect for diversity and opportunities for them to develop their understanding of equality, for example through the recent Stonewall Youth Programme and 'drop-down days'.
- Pupils also have a wide range of opportunities during tutorial sessions to reflect on current issues, and to consider their own views and those of others. However, some

pupils said that they did not value these lessons and their attitudes to learning are not consistently strong in these sessions.

- Pupils said that they feel safe in the school and that they know whom to report any concerns to. They said that the school does not accept any bullying and that any incidents are dealt with well by staff. Some pupils have been trained to support any pupils who have experienced bullying and they show a high level of care for each other. Pupils show a sound understanding of the different types of bullying and there is a well-planned programme about online safety so pupils are aware of potential risks.
- Pupils attending off-site education are well looked after. Their teachers know them well and communicate any concerns to school leaders.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' attendance is improving but remains below the national average. Leaders have introduced more effective ways of encouraging pupils to attend more often, but poor attendance is affecting the progress of some disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Some pupils continue to show very challenging behaviour. The number of pupils who are excluded from school for a fixed period is reducing but it is still too high. Leaders are reviewing the use of the school's sanctions and the quality of support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make sure that exclusions reduce further.
- Pupils take pride in their work and they are smartly dressed in their school uniform. They behave in an orderly way during lunchtimes and breaks. They show respect for each other and for adults. Pupils said that they appreciate the support that their teachers and other adults provide for them. Relationships within the school are very positive.
- Pupils listen well in class and most pupils follow their teachers' instructions to work quietly when required. Pupils said that the 'positive discipline' procedures have generally led to improved behaviour in classrooms and around the school. They also said that they value the increased use of praise and rewards. However, they reported that pupils do not always behave well for supply teachers.
- The attendance and behaviour of the Year 11 pupils who attend off-site provision have improved. This is because they enjoy their courses.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Leaders did not take effective action to stem the decline in standards in 2015. In 2016, the progress of most pupils was below average across several subjects. The progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was well below average. Teachers' assessment of pupils' progress was not accurate.
- In 2016, the progress made by disadvantaged pupils was well below average in

English, mathematics, science and humanities compared to other pupils nationally. Leaders did not use the pupil premium funding effectively to raise the aspirations of this group of pupils or to improve their basic skills. This year, leaders have tailored their strategies to meet the needs of individual pupils and, in Year 10, gaps in progress between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are diminishing. In other year groups, the strategies are too new to show an impact.

- The school's progress information shows that current pupils are now making better progress in most year groups. In Year 11, pupils are making faster progress in English and mathematics due to a greater focus on revision techniques and targeted teaching on topics which pupils do not fully understand. In Year 8, leaders recognise that the progress of some groups of pupils was affected by poor teaching during Year 7. They have put in place a programme to accelerate the learning of these groups in English so their basic skills have improved.
- Evidence of work in pupils' books shows that some pupils are making good progress over time but this remains inconsistent within subjects. Some pupils' progress is hampered by a lack of quality teaching. The school's programme to improve reading is in its early stages of development. Pupils do not always apply their numeracy skills accurately in subjects other than mathematics, for example when using graphs or data.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make variable progress, particularly in English. Leaders have identified this and have begun a full review of the support and teaching provided for this group across the curriculum. The coordinator for special educational needs has been given more time to develop her role in monitoring their progress more closely.
- Pupils in Year 11 who attend off-site education are making better progress since starting their new courses. The curriculum is well-matched to their interests. Their teachers and tutors plan effectively to meet their needs, and their progress is monitored closely. Most pupils have clear plans to carry on into further education or employment with training.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

**Requires improvement**

- Leadership in the sixth form requires improvement because the quality of teaching is variable across subjects and leaders' plans for improvement lack focus. Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learners' progress are not well developed.
- In recent years, leaders have not ensured that learners have followed appropriate courses which are well matched to individuals' skills and careers aspirations. As a result, some learners have left the sixth form before the end of Year 12. Others have not continued into Year 13, which means that retention rates have been too low.
- Learners' attendance requires improvement because it has declined this year and is much lower than in the main school. Leaders have recently appointed an administrator to track attendance in the sixth form, and the importance of good attendance is being promoted more vigorously. Leaders have also reviewed the use of study time so that some learners are given more support.
- Some teaching in the sixth form is very effective, and where it is, learners benefit from the high expectations that teachers have of them. Learners said that they value the

level of teachers' feedback during lessons because some of the group sizes are small. Learners have a detailed understanding of the requirements of the examinations and teachers use their subject knowledge to develop learners' understanding. However, some teachers' questions confirm or correct learners' knowledge without probing their thinking any further. In some subjects, learners are not given enough opportunities to develop their extended writing.

- Outcomes for most groups of learners improved in 2016, across a range of subjects. Disadvantaged learners made good progress overall and boys' progress improved. Teachers' forecasts suggest that, by the end of the year, most learners currently in the school will also make good progress overall, but progress is variable across subjects.
- Learners who have not achieved at least a C grade in English and mathematics by the end of key stage 4 are taught well. The proportion achieving grade C in English and mathematics is slightly above that found nationally in Year 12, and the majority are successful in improving their grades.
- Leaders have planned the 16 to 19 programme carefully to make sure that learners benefit from a wide range of additional activities to promote their personal development. The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme engages learners in discussing the potential risks they may face. Learners also show a good understanding of radicalisation, extremism and British values. All learners in the sixth form have the chance to volunteer to support younger pupils as part of their timetable. Activities include providing classroom support, technician support, listening to pupils read and developing pupils' leadership skills. All learners benefit from a period of work experience, which is well promoted by a dedicated coordinator.
- Learners in the sixth form receive appropriate careers advice and the proportion progressing onto higher education is above average.
- Learners show positive attitudes towards their studies. They are attentive in lessons and contribute well in learning activities when given the opportunity to work with each other. They spoke highly of the school's approach to promoting tolerance and respect for others.



## School details

Unique reference number	135935
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10000522

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1364
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	196
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Anthony Blackwell
Acting Principal	Ben Wheeler
Telephone number	01132 295454
Website	<a href="http://www.leedswestacademy.org.uk">www.leedswestacademy.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:wheeler.b@whiteroseacademies.org">wheeler.b@whiteroseacademies.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	20–21 March 2012

## Information about this school

- Leeds West Academy is an above-average sized school with a sixth form. Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- The school uses a range of alternative provision off-site. Ten pupils attend at West 14 and four pupils attend at West 11, provision run by a local partnership of schools. In addition, seven pupils attend P@CC; six pupils attend AIM education; two pupils attend

Leeds City College; two pupils attend Springwell; two pupils attend Hunslet Boys and Girls Club and one pupil attends Oasis.

- Since the last inspection, the school has joined the White Rose Academies Trust, which includes two other secondary schools in Leeds. Since September 2016, the school has also been supported by the Gorse Academies Trust.
- A new executive principal was appointed by the White Rose Academies Trust in September 2016. Several new senior leaders were appointed in September 2016 and in January 2017. A new principal has been appointed to begin in the 2017 summer term.
- The school meets the government's minimum expectations for the performance of secondary schools.
- 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.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 47 lessons across all key stages and subjects, including tutorials. Some were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. In addition to looking at pupils' books in lesson observations, inspectors undertook a separate scrutiny of books. Inspectors also undertook learning walks with leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and to evaluate the way in which the school develops literacy and numeracy.
- Meetings were held with the executive principal, the acting principal, senior and middle leaders, governors and a trust representative. Inspectors also met with a group of teachers and with pupils from all year groups, including in the sixth form. The lead inspector also spoke to the executive principal of the Gorse Academies Trust by telephone.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, the school's quality assurance, monitoring and assessment records, minutes of the local accountability board meetings and case studies of vulnerable pupils who receive additional support. Inspectors scrutinised safeguarding procedures and related policies.
- Inspectors considered 30 responses received from parents to Ofsted's survey, 46 responses from pupils and 57 responses from staff.

## Inspection team

Lynn Kenworthy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gordon Watts	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Cook	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Rogers	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Crossley	Ofsted Inspector
Joan Hewitt	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Cooper	Ofsted Inspector

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