

Leeds East Academy

South Parkway, Seacroft, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS14 6TY

Inspection dates

23–24 May 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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement over time has not been good enough. By Year 11, standards are low.
- The progress of current pupils, although improving, is not consistently good, particularly in mathematics and science.
- The quality of teaching is variable. Teachers do not use assessment information effectively to plan work that has the right level of challenge.
- Gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding remain.
- Teachers' skills in questioning pupils and checking their understanding require further development.
- Some teachers do not use assessment information effectively to plan work which has the right level of challenge. Gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding remain unmet.
- Weaknesses in pupils' literacy skills continue to hamper their achievement. Teachers do not pick up inaccuracies in pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar consistently. The Year 7 catch-up funding is not used to good effect.
- Pupils' attendance is improving but remains below average. Too many disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are still regularly absent.
- The number of pupils excluded from school for poor behaviour is reducing but is still too high.
- Subject leaders, some who are new to their roles, are not yet effective in improving the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Although governors' skills are improving, they do not yet rigorously hold leaders to account.

The school has the following strengths

- The new executive principal and principal are already raising pupils' aspirations and improving standards. Staff and pupils are inspired by their determination to improve pupils' progress rapidly.
- Leaders are taking the right steps to improve teaching. As a result, pupils' attainment in all subjects and year groups is improving.
- Teachers are well supported by the Gorse Academies Trust to improve their teaching and leadership skills.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school and in lessons. The school is a safe and caring environment in which pupils show respect for one another.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress, across all year groups, particularly in mathematics and science by:
 - ensuring that all teachers take account of pupils' starting points when planning and teaching lessons so that all groups are challenged appropriately
 - making sure that all pupils who have gaps in their knowledge and understanding are given the additional support they need to catch up quickly
 - developing teachers' questioning skills to check pupils' understanding and build pupils' confidence to extend their explanations
 - strengthening the school's approach to expanding pupils' use of subject-specific language and vocabulary, and consistently correcting errors in pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - continuing to address the variability in the quality of teaching
 - ensuring that all subject leaders, including those who have been recently appointed, are given the training and support they need to tackle the weaknesses in teaching and pupils' progress
 - checking rigorously that pupils' literacy and mathematical skills are being developed well in all subjects and that additional funding is being used effectively
 - strengthening governors' skills so that they can challenge leaders more rigorously
 - continuing to reduce fixed-term exclusions and pupils' absence, especially for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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 and governors did not act quickly enough to prevent the serious decline in pupils' outcomes across the school since the last inspection. The recently appointed principal and executive principal are already having a very positive impact on all areas of school improvement. Crucially, pupils are no longer underachieving. However, improvements are relatively recent and, consequently, there is still some way to go before the changes result in consistently good progress of pupils across the school.
- Previously, the curriculum was not appropriate for the full range of pupils. For example, some pupils were entered for too many qualifications and only a small number of pupils were entered for a qualification in dual science. This contributed to pupils' past underachievement. Leaders have now addressed these weaknesses. The curriculum is now well planned and tailored to the needs of different groups of pupils so that they can be more successful. A range of extra-curricular opportunities are also available to encourage pupils to increase their skills and confidence to try new experiences.
- Recent improvements in subject leadership are improving the progress of current pupils in mathematics and science. For example, in mathematics, the curriculum is developing pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills. Improved planning and practical lessons in science are engaging pupils in discovering new information. However, the current lack of specialist mathematics teachers still hampers pupils' progress. Some pupils still have wide gaps in their knowledge and skills.
- Some leaders are not skilful in checking and improving the quality of teaching and learning in the subjects that they lead. Some newly appointed subject leaders are still developing their understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their subject areas. Therefore, the pace of improvement in subject areas is variable. Senior leaders are aware of this and are now providing regular, effective training for this group of leaders.
- Leaders have not yet secured the necessary improvement for the high proportion of pupils who join the school with weak literacy and mathematical skills. Although there is some effective support for younger pupils, leaders have not ensured that all teachers teach these skills consistently well. As a result, many pupils lack the basic skills they need to read, write, reason and solve problems.
- The school spends pupil premium funding judiciously on a range of interventions to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders now monitor this use of this funding well and the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, although still too low, is improving markedly. Their progress is also improving steadily.
- Similarly, leaders use the additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to provide carefully considered interventions to meet pupils' emotional and academic needs. Consequently, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities attend more regularly and make better progress than they have done in the recent past.
- The recently appointed principal and executive principal identify the areas of the school's work which require rapid improvement accurately. They have taken decisive action to eliminate inadequate teaching and learning through rigorous monitoring of

teachers' performance and pupils' progress. Consequently, current pupils in the school are making much faster progress than in the past. Even so, variability in the quality of teaching still remains.

- The school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural programme is carefully planned and delivered through coaching sessions, assemblies and 'drop-down' days as well as through all subjects. Pupils talk confidently about a wide range of topics, for example online safety, cultural differences within Europe, personal identity, drugs education and funding for the National Health Service. Resources for these sessions are well prepared centrally to provoke debate, encouraging pupils to form their own opinions. However, some form tutors do not have the skills to deliver these materials successfully.
- Careers guidance is well coordinated. Pupils have access to impartial advice and are well supported to make appropriate choices for further education, training and employment. As a result, pupils have a clear understanding of the pathways they can follow after Year 11.
- External support from The Gorse Academies Trust has been well received by teachers and leaders. Subject leaders report that partnership working with other schools has improved their skills in checking teaching and pupils' progress. All staff have access to a well-planned programme of professional development, resulting in stronger teaching across the school.
- Leaders have been successful in creating a positive working atmosphere. Pupils show high levels of respect for each other and are increasingly aware of the desire of staff for them to succeed. Higher expectations of behaviour, attendance and the way in which pupils present their work are helping pupils to value their education.
- Staff and pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the changing culture of the school. Several staff commented on the ways in which they believe the school is 'rapidly improving'. Comments such as 'It is a privilege to work here', 'The principal's vision is clear, aspirational and inspirational' and 'I am proud to work for the students who come here' were typical. Pupils also talked about the positive effect of recent changes, and their views were well summed up by one, who said, 'I like how our school is on a journey and it will get there.'

Governance of the school

- The local governing body, known as the local accountability board (LAB), did not provide appropriate challenge to school leaders in the recent past, but this is changing.
- Governors told inspectors they were 'shocked' by the 'atrocious' 2016 examination results, acknowledging that they had been previously given inaccurate and unreliable information about pupils' progress and the quality of teaching.
- The chair of the LAB is also a trustee. He is knowledgeable about governors' responsibilities and, with the support of the executive principal, has made some effective changes this year to the way in which governors hold leaders to account. Increasingly, governors are beginning to ask challenging questions of leaders. For example, they have requested regular updates on behaviour and attendance. They oversee the use of the pupil premium funding rigorously but they have a less well-developed understanding of the impact of other sources of additional funding, such as

the Year 7 catch-up funding.

- Governors have recently reviewed their responsibilities and now have a more detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- The governors monitor the school's safeguarding procedures well.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's processes for reporting and acting on concerns are robust. They are well understood by school staff because all staff have been given regular and up-to-date training on how to safeguard children. Staff are vigilant and know how to look out for any signs of abuse. Leaders know their pupils well and make pupils' well-being a priority.
- The designated safeguarding leader and pastoral teams take swift action to deal with any reported risks to pupils. They are tenacious in following up concerns with local agencies. They monitor carefully any pupils at risk of being missing from education. Pre-employment recruitment checks are also compliant with statutory requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across a range of subjects, while improving, is variable. Consequently, pupils do not make consistently good progress. Although school leaders have been successful in tackling weaker teaching and have appointed new teachers, some will not join the school until the next academic year. Pupils in some groups have already had several teachers, especially in English, mathematics and science this year.
- Teachers' use of the wide range of assessment information available to inform their planning is variable. Some teachers use it well, making sure that pupils' varying abilities and needs are taken into good account. However, often the same work is set for pupils with very different starting points and pupils, especially the most able, are not challenged effectively. For example, for some pupils, the work provided is too easy or they wait too long to move onto the next learning activity. At other times, pupils who have gaps in their knowledge and understanding are not given effective support to make up those gaps quickly.
- Not all teachers use questioning well to check pupils' learning and pick up their misconceptions. Pupils are sometimes moved onto the next stage in their learning before they have mastered basic skills. They find it difficult to explain their ideas fully in writing because they are not given sufficient opportunity to respond to challenging questions or to discuss and explore new information in enough depth.
- The school has recently introduced a new approach to developing pupils' literacy skills but this is not yet fully embedded. Pupils' reading skills are improving but not quickly enough. Pupils now have regular opportunities to write in lessons and practise the skills they need for examinations. However, teachers do not correct errors in pupils' spelling, punctuation, grammar and paragraphing consistently. There is also more to do to increase pupils' use of subject-specific language and more sophisticated vocabulary which they need to gain the higher grades.

- Most teachers set high expectations of pupils and homework tasks are now set regularly. Pupils use the study support available during lunchtimes and 'session 6', after school hours, to improve their learning. Therefore, pupils are beginning to develop stronger learning habits.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. Well-considered routines at the start of lessons mean that little learning time is lost. Pupils show resilience when completing tasks because teachers have higher expectations of them than in the recent past.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Many pupils are not self-confident learners. Teachers give pupils too few opportunities to explore and express their own views. Some pupils have not developed independent learning skills so their understanding and language skills still require improvement.
- Pupils said that they feel safe in the school. They are helped to stay safe in different situations through a well-organised series of assemblies and tutorial sessions which explore topics such as online safety, how to stay healthy and the threat of terrorist and extremist activities.
- Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying, particularly racist bullying and homophobic bullying. The number of bullying incidents reported this year has reduced. Pupils say that staff deal with any bullying quickly. They are very positive about the support given to them by teachers and other staff.
- Pupils who are educated in alternative provision off site benefit from a high level of support. Leaders keep careful records which show that their behaviour, attendance and progress are improving.
- School leaders know the local community well and work hard to engage parents. The school also works effectively with other local agencies in housing, social care and health, taking great care to work closely with pupils who are vulnerable and with their families. The work of the family liaison officer and behaviour support workers is leading to a marked improvement in some pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- Pupils are smart in their uniform and are proud of their school. Leaders have recently raised pupils' expectations of the quality of presentation required in their books. Pupils are responding positively to these expectations and they value the school's use of rewards and praise.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Despite the effective introduction of the school's 'positive discipline' system, a small proportion of pupils continue to challenge the school's expectations. The rate of fixed-term exclusion is reducing but is still much higher than the national average, especially for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who

have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

- Most teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, but when teaching is less effective, groups of pupils, especially boys, sometimes engage in off-task talking and do not pay sufficient attention to their work.
- Over time, the proportion of pupils who are absent and regularly absent has been well above average. Leaders are now tackling this well and attendance is improving markedly. However, absence and persistent absence remain above average, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils attend lessons on time but leaders agree that punctuality to school needs to improve further.
- The school's behaviour records show that the number of pupils removed from lessons due to poor behaviour is reducing. Most pupils follow their teachers' instructions promptly and show positive attitudes to learning, especially when learning is well planned.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around school between lessons and during social times. They are well supervised by staff but they also mix well together, showing respect for each other and for adults. Pupils say that behaviour has improved considerably due to the higher expectations brought in by teachers and leaders.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In Year 11 in 2015 and 2016, pupils underachieved considerably in a range of subjects, especially in mathematics and science. Standards achieved were low. However, as a result of stronger leadership and improvements in teaching, current pupils in the school are making much better progress from their starting points and standards are rising. Even so, outcomes still require improvement, especially in mathematics and science.
- Many pupils join the school in Year 7 with standards in reading, writing and mathematics which are well below the national average. The Year 7 catch-up funding, which aims to help pupils with low literacy and mathematical skills to improve, is not targeted well enough to enable pupils to make up for gaps in their basic skills quickly. Pupils do not use and apply these basic skills consistently across the subjects.
- Boys make less progress than girls because their attitudes to learning are weaker than girls in some subjects when teaching is less effective. Often, boys' written work is less well developed.
- The most able pupils have underachieved considerably in the past. Inspection evidence and school information that tracks pupils' achievements show that the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are now making better progress in both key stages 3 and 4. However, the most able pupils are still not challenged enough to enable them to make good progress.
- In 2015 and 2016, by the end of key stage 4, disadvantaged pupils achieved on average more than a grade below other pupils nationally. Leaders recognised this and have successfully re-allocated additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils more effectively. Improved attendance and attitudes to learning are leading to much better

outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in the current Years 10 and 11.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities did not made good progress in the past. Leaders have introduced a range of interventions to support this group of pupils more effectively. Some creative 'therapy' sessions led by school staff, and specialist teaching in speech and language, help to overcome the academic and emotional barriers to pupils' learning. There are early signs that these new approaches are improving the attendance, behaviour and progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress from their starting points because they are given specialist support to help them to be successful.
- Leaders have taken decisive action to prioritise well-planned intervention and effective teaching for the current Year 11 pupils, and their progress is tracked closely. They have been well prepared for their examinations and show a growing confidence to tackle examination questions, through activities that the school calls 'red zone tasks'. This year's Year 11 pupils are on track to do better across the subjects they study than pupils in Year 11 last year.
- In other year groups, there is also strong evidence in pupils' current work that they are making much better progress. Pupils are now set challenging targets that are based on them making greater than expected progress. These targets are encouraging pupils to work harder. For younger pupils, changes to the curriculum and higher expectations have had more time to make a difference.
- In both mathematics and science, current pupils are making better progress than in the past but at a slower rate than in other subjects. Recent changes in leadership are making a positive difference. Teaching is now checked more regularly and teachers are being supported to improve their practice. Leaders are making sure that the curriculum is more stimulating. Pupils now understand the more complex concepts in science. Nevertheless, the lack of specialist teachers, particularly in mathematics, continues to hamper the rate of improvement. Some pupils still have wide gaps in their knowledge in mathematics and science.

School details

Unique reference number	136826
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10023824

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 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	736
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Darren Shickle
Principal	Christopher Stokes
Telephone number	0113 2731964
Website	www.leedseastacademy.org.uk
Email address	waller.e@whiteroseacademies.org
Date of previous inspection	15–16 January 2015

Information about this school

- Leeds East Academy is smaller than the average secondary school. It no longer has a sixth form.
- The school is part of the White Rose Academies Trust and has a local accountability board responsible for the school's governance. Since September 2016, The GORSE Academies Trust has also supported the school.
- The principal who was in place at the time of the last inspection left the school in October 2016. The current principal became the acting principal and then took up the substantive post in January 2017. The executive principal was appointed in September 2016 to have overall leadership of the three schools in the trust.
- Two thirds of the pupils are of White British heritage and one third are of minority ethnic heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium

funding is well above average.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average.
- The school uses a range of alternative providers to support a small number of pupils to improve their behaviour. These placements are arranged through the Area Inclusion Partnership of schools in East Leeds and include Progress at City Central, Aspire and Achieve, Involve, Elect and OIL.
- The school did not meet the government's minimum floor standards for secondary schools in 2015 and 2016.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 4 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.
- The school complies with the Department for Education's guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 46 lessons across all key stages and subjects, including coaching sessions. 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 a learning walk with leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Meetings were held with the principal, executive principal, senior and middle leaders, governors on the local accountability board and a representative from the trust. Inspectors also met with a group of teachers and with pupils from all year groups.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, quality assurance documents and monitoring and assessment records. Minutes of governing body meetings and case studies of vulnerable pupils who receive additional support were also considered. Inspectors scrutinised safeguarding procedures and related policies.
- Inspectors considered responses received from parents to Ofsted's survey, 61 responses from staff and the school's own surveys of pupils' views.

Inspection team

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Carl Sugden	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Rogers	Ofsted Inspector

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