

Laisterdyke Leadership Academy

Thornbury Road, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD3 8HE

Inspection dates

12–13 February 2019

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

- Although current pupils' progress is improving, in 2018, pupils' progress at the end of Year 11 fell below the national average. Progress was weak in a range of subjects, including English, science and the humanities subjects of history and geography. The progress of disadvantaged pupils has been poor for two years.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable. Teachers' use of questioning and the clarity of their explanations of tasks are inconsistent. Consequently, the progress made by pupils is variable, within and between subjects.
- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement. This is because expectations and routines to ensure that pupils consistently conduct themselves with self-discipline are not fully embedded.
- The school community is generally a harmonious one. However, a very small minority of pupils do not feel able to tell an adult if they are worried about bullying.
- Students' progress on their A-level courses is variable and requires improvement, especially in applied general subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- Supported by the trust and governors, the new principal is moving the school in the right direction. Leaders have high aspirations for what the pupils can achieve.
- Following the appointment of the principal, pupils' behaviour is improving, and their attendance has started to improve.
- The curriculum has been remodelled so that it better meets the needs of pupils.
- While still variable, the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are beginning to improve, including in subject areas which have seen poor recent outcomes.
- Students in the sixth form benefit from a supportive wider curriculum, including work experience, which further develops their skills.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management, by:
 - further extending the work already taking place to provide all pupils with a consistently strong understanding of how to recognise and respond appropriately and safely to a range of diverse views and values
 - ensuring that all pupils feel able to tell an adult if they are worried about bullying, with confidence that it will be dealt with effectively.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that it is consistently good and pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve well by ensuring that:
 - teachers use questions more effectively to check pupils' understanding and to stretch and challenge pupils
 - there is greater clarity in teachers' explanations of tasks, so that pupils understand what they are doing and why.
- Further improve the standard of pupils' behaviour, by:
 - quickly establishing leaders' expectations of pupils' conduct, so that good behaviour is consistent, and pupils self-regulate their behaviour
 - continuing to improve rates of pupils' attendance and reducing persistent absence, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve the consistency of sixth-form students' progress in A-level courses, particularly in applied general subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Under the leadership of the recently appointed principal, supported by Star Academies Trust (the trust), the school is heading in the right direction. Leaders have started to build a more ambitious culture for pupils. All of the pupils who spoke to inspectors said that the school is improving since the arrival of the new principal. She has a determination that the school will further improve rapidly.
- Trust leaders have acted effectively to address many of the areas for improvement that were evident in the school. For example, the curriculum has been remodelled so that it better suits the needs of pupils. Additional time has been found for the teaching of English and mathematics, for instance. New policies and procedures for safeguarding were introduced, with the effect that systems are secure and thorough.
- While trust leaders have taken effective action to address many of the weaknesses in the school, they have not been consistently effective in all areas. For instance, while pupils' behaviour is improving, some pupils do not have the ability to self-regulate their behaviour. A very small number of pupils do not feel able to tell an adult if they are being bullied, because the necessary climate to do so has not been consistently established. Despite leaders' programmes for pupils' personal development and welfare, some pupils are unclear about how to recognise and respond appropriately and safely to a range of diverse views and values.
- Leaders have a commitment to nurturing pupils' wider development as young people and future citizens. It is early days, but the recently introduced 'Star Leadership Programme' provides opportunities for pupils to develop their service to the community, their teamwork, their ambition and their respect for others. For example, pupils in Year 10 told inspectors about their training to become 'reading leaders' to support weaker readers in Year 7.
- All of the staff who spoke to inspectors were positive and optimistic about the improvements they can see. Staff at different career points and with different responsibilities speak highly of the continuing professional development they receive, particularly from the trust's senior and subject leaders working alongside them. However, in the staff survey, some staff were less positive, especially about standards of behaviour.
- Leaders' effectiveness in the use of pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils and the Year 7 catch-up is beginning to improve. Leaders recognise that, until recently, their evaluation of the effect of their use of the funding was not focused enough and that as a result, their plans were not as effective as they needed to be. This has been addressed, with the result that there are emerging signs of improving progress and attendance for disadvantaged pupils.

Governance of the school

- Governors have the relevant experience and professional skills to enable the governing body to hold school leaders to account.

- Governors make effective use of the trust's systems for reporting how well the school is performing. As a result, governors have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and its weaknesses. They are honest and transparent in their recognition of where leaders have been less effective. For example, while leaders now focus primarily on pupils' progress in measuring how pupils are achieving, until recently there was more emphasis on pupils' attainment. This masked, to some extent, the true picture of how Year 11 in 2018 were expected to perform. Governors now receive information about pupils' progress, which is more helpful to them in challenging school leaders.
- Records of governors' meetings show that they are now presented with appropriate information about the performance of the school. Governors ask relevant and probing questions so that school leaders are properly held to account.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that appropriate processes for the safeguarding of pupils are in place. The checks on adults who work in, or visit, the school meet legal requirements. Staff are trained in the necessary safeguarding topics, such as the signs of abuse to watch out for and the risk signs of radicalisation and extremism. The culture of safeguarding is a strong one.
- The staff with particular responsibility for safeguarding are assiduous in their duties. They make sure that all staff are up to date in their training. They keep detailed records about any referrals to the local authority's children's services or other external agencies.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Across a range of subjects and years, teaching is of a variable quality.
- Some teachers make effective use of questions to check on pupils' understanding. Questions are also used to good effect to stretch pupils' knowledge and to develop their skills further. These strengths are evident in a number of subject areas and in both key stages. However, there is a lack of consistency in the quality of teachers' questioning, so that even in the same subject areas, some questioning does not stretch and push pupils on in their learning as much as it should.
- On occasions, there is a mismatch between the task set on the classroom whiteboard and the task as explained by the teacher. Consequently, pupils are confused about what they should be doing and their understanding of the purpose of the learning is unclear. As a result, they do not make strong gains in their learning. At other times, there is a much clearer explanation of the task, with a clarity about the important skills being practised. On these occasions, pupils were observed to make stronger progress.
- Most of the time, teachers display a good level of subject knowledge. In different subject areas, pupils are often taught appropriate subject-specific terms. This enables them to access the higher mark-bands in examination questions, for example. On a very few occasions, it was observed that teachers' subject knowledge is less strong. At these times, pupils are taught new knowledge incorrectly or superficially.

- In some subjects, such as in mathematics, pupils are supported and challenged to make strong progress through a carefully structured curriculum. Inspectors found that pupils' knowledge is developed, tested and revised, with the result that they have a secure grounding in essential knowledge and skills before moving on in their learning. In other subjects, however, inspectors also found that there is not as much regular consolidation of subject knowledge, so that pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are less deep.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- For the majority of their time in school, pupils are keen to be successful. Leaders encourage them to be aspirational in their career ambitions. Usually, especially in key stage 4, pupils know what they need to do to improve. Sometimes, they are less clear about how well they are achieving or what to do to improve the quality of their work.
- In discussion with inspectors, most pupils had a secure understanding of fundamental British values. They could tell inspectors about how the school teaches them about tolerance, respect and the rule of law, for example. Pupils have also been taught about how to keep themselves safe online and the potential consequences of various illegal activities.
- There is a mixed picture as to the extent to which pupils understand the risks posed by radicalisation and extremism. Some pupils have a secure, detailed awareness, but others are less clear. Leaders are aware of this and plan to review their teaching of this topic.
- Leaders are also aware that, currently, the curriculum time made available to teaching pupils' personal, social, health, careers and economics education is limited, and consequently limits the depth to which the necessary topics are covered. The quality of how this programme is delivered is variable. Leaders are working hard to establish a culture and climate in which all pupils feel able to tell an adult if worried about bullying. The majority of pupils who spoke to inspectors said that bullying is unusual in school and that it is dealt with effectively if it happens. A small number of pupils think that the school is less effective in sorting it out. A very small number of pupils told inspectors that, sometimes, pupils would not tell an adult about bullying because they would worry about the reaction of other pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- During the inspection, pupils' standards of behaviour were, in the main, positive. All of the pupils spoken to by inspectors said that behaviour is improving, especially since the appointment of the new principal. All of the staff spoken to by inspectors agreed that standards of pupils' behaviour, from a low base, are getting better.

- Despite leaders' actions to improve standards of behaviour, some pupils and some staff say that pupils' behaviour is not where it needs to be. In the staff survey, a few staff expressed concerns about pupils' conduct around the school and the effectiveness of leaders in dealing with it. Overall, pupils require a high level of staff supervision to maintain a calm and orderly atmosphere on corridors and in social spaces. Some pupils do not have the ability at present to consistently self-regulate their behaviour.
- In lessons, pupils generally behave well. To a large extent, this is because of the quality of the relationships that exist between most staff and pupils. For the majority of the time, pupils speak appropriately to staff. There is some off-task talking at times in a range of subjects and year groups, but staff deal with this in line with school policies.
- During the academic year 2017/18 there was an increase in the number of pupils who received a fixed-term exclusion from school. This lifted the rate of fixed-term exclusions well above the national average. Leaders put this down to a firmer application of the trust's behaviour policy. During this academic year to date, the rate of fixed-term exclusions is reducing as behaviour begins to improve. Leaders have also started to implement some alternatives to exclusion for those at risk of being excluded.
- Over time, pupils' overall attendance is low and their overall persistent absence is high. However, there are signs of improvement. Leaders have taken effective action to put strategies in place which have started to improve pupils' attendance. As a result, the rate of persistent absence has declined by a substantial amount this academic year for all year groups. The attendance of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a particularly improving picture.
- Leaders have ensured that, when alternative educational provision is used for a small number of pupils, there are effective processes in place to monitor their attendance, behaviour, personal development and welfare.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2018, the progress of Year 11 pupils was below the national average. Progress was especially weak in English and a range of other subjects, including science, history and geography. However, the progress of pupils in mathematics has been in line with the national average for two years.
- As a result of leaders' actions, largely taken this academic year, outcomes for current pupils are improving. This is evident in a range of subjects and across year groups, including where outcomes in 2018 were weak, such as English and science. There are indications of improving outcomes for pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged.
- Pupils' progress from their starting points is variable even within subject areas. Inspectors found that where teachers' expectations and subject knowledge are strong and where teachers' planning takes pupils' starting points into account, pupils' progress is greater.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils have access to careers education, information, advice and guidance, which provides them with good support. As a consequence, the rate of pupils who progress to a sustained next step of further education or training is in line with the national average.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Over time, progress for students on 16 to 19 study programmes has been in line with the national average. However, there is some variability. Current progress information and inspection evidence indicate that students on applied general courses are not making as strong progress as students on academic courses.
- Leaders use the school's systems for checking the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the sixth form, but it is too soon to see the impact on the progress of current students.
- Some teaching in the sixth form is very effective and, where it is, students benefit from positive relationships with teachers who have high expectations of them. Students have a thorough understanding of the requirements of the forthcoming examinations, which they use to develop their work to a high standard. Teachers often use questioning to stretch students' thinking. However, this is not the case in every subject and, sometimes, students are not challenged enough.
- Those students who have not achieved at least a grade 4 or above in GCSE English and/or mathematics by the end of key stage 4 are helped to do so. The majority of students improve their grades in English and mathematics.
- Most students successfully complete the qualifications they start. This is due to the effective careers education, information, advice and guidance they receive before they embark on any courses and the ongoing support made available to them.
- Students benefit from good opportunities to develop their wider skills, such as taking part in work experience. They also benefit from a structured approach to preparing them for university applications, employment or training. As a result of such support and opportunities, in 2018, every student went on to an appropriately challenging next step.

School details

Unique reference number	142681
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	10059029

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	958
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	88
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	John Gornall
Principal	Karen Jones
Telephone number	01274 401140
Website	www.laisterdykeleadershipacademy.com
Email address	info@laisterdyke.tetrust.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Laisterdyke Leadership Academy converted to be an academy school on 1 April 2016. When its predecessor school, Laisterdyke Business and Enterprise College, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- The school is part of Star Academies Trust. Trust members appoint the trustees. The board of trustees delegates some powers to the school's local governing body.
- The current principal was appointed in October 2018. The chair of the governing body was appointed in September 2017.

- The trust provides a substantial amount of support to the school, which includes senior leadership and subject leadership support.
- The majority of pupils are of Asian British-Pakistani origin, with other pupils of Asian British-Bangladeshi origin. There is a proportion of pupils who are of White-Romany or Gypsy origin. A small proportion of pupils are White British. The ethnic origin of just over a quarter of pupils is deemed by the school to be 'not known'.
- The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is in the top 20% of schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is also in the top 20% of schools nationally.
- The school has links with Bradford College to provide alternative education for a small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a wide range of lessons across different year groups. At times, they were accompanied by school senior leaders. As part of these visits, inspectors spoke with pupils and looked in their books.
- Inspectors met formally with four groups of pupils, drawn from a cross-section of pupils. Inspectors spoke informally with pupils around the school at different times of the day.
- Inspectors met with four groups of staff, representing: middle leaders; teachers at different career points, including newly and recently qualified teachers; non-teaching staff; and a mixed group of teachers and non-teachers.
- Meetings were held with the principal and a senior trust leader. Other meetings were held with senior leaders responsible for: the sixth form; safeguarding; attendance and behaviour; the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; the pupil premium; careers education, information, advice and guidance; measuring pupils' progress; pupils' personal development and welfare; and pupils with SEND.
- A meeting was held with the trust's chief executive officer and the chair of the governing body.
- Three scrutinies of pupils' books were carried out alongside subject leaders, in mathematics, science and humanities.
- A wide range of documentation was evaluated, including: bullying logs; child protection case files and other safeguarding documents; logs of racist incidents and behaviour incidents; minutes of governors' meetings; records of leaders' quality assurance processes to check on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning; attendance and behaviour information; and programmes of study for pupils' personal development and welfare.
- Inspectors took into account the two free-text responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Parent View; 67 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils; and 45 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Steve Shaw, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Pridding	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Cook	Ofsted Inspector
Carl Sugden	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for students of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019