

Leeds West Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135935
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	381964
Inspection dates	20–21 March 2012
Lead inspector	Jan Bennett HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,008
Of which number on roll in the sixth form	167
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tom Peryer
Headteacher	Annette Hall
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Intake Lane Rodley Leeds LS13 1DQ
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Introduction

Inspection team

Jan Bennett
James McGrath
Andrew Henderson
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Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 37 lessons taught by 36 different teachers. Meetings were held with four groups of students; the Chair of the Governing Body; a representative of the sponsor and academy staff, including leaders and managers. Inspectors observed the academy's work and looked at a number of documents, including the academy's self-evaluation, the safeguarding and inclusion policies, student tracking and assessment information and minutes of governing body meetings. They analysed 240 parental and carers' questionnaires and others completed by students and staff. There were insufficient responses by parents and carers to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to take account of when planning the inspection.

Information about the school

Leeds West Academy opened in September 2009 replacing the predecessor school, Intake High School, in the existing buildings. The headteacher of the predecessor school was appointed as the Principal of the academy but almost all other senior leaders were appointed for the opening of the academy. The academy moved into its new building in September 2011. The academy is sponsored by E-ACT and is a specialist performing arts college.

The academy is of average size for a secondary school. A high proportion of students are known to be eligible for free school meals and most students are White British with very few speaking English as an additional language. While the proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is well above average, the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is low.

The academy met the minimum current government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. At the monitoring visit in March 2011, the academy had made good progress towards raising standards.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	1

Key Findings

- The academy provides a good education and is improving rapidly. Its reputation is growing quickly and it is over-subscribed for the first time. Leadership of the academy is exceptional and the drive for excellence is relentless. Overall effectiveness is good rather than outstanding, however, as many of the very effective strategies introduced need time to impact fully.
- Achievement is improving very quickly across all year groups. Value-added statistics show students make much better progress than expected given their low starting points. In 2011, examination results were considerably better than previous years and early entry examinations results indicate an impressive improvement this year, especially in mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is improving quickly. Lessons are very well-planned and teachers use a wide variety of resources and activities to enthuse and engage students. Assessment is good.
- Behaviour and attendance have improved considerably. Students' conduct around the academy is good and most students behave well in lessons but a small minority still cause low level disruption which is why behaviour overall is satisfactory. The overwhelming majority of students feel safe in the academy.
- The sixth form is good. The curriculum is very responsive to students' changing needs and academic A-level programmes are now offered as an alternative to well-established, successful BTEC courses. Teaching in the sixth form is good. Sixth formers play an increasingly important role in the academy by mentoring younger students and developing links in the community. Support for sixth former students is very strong and attendance is improving as a result of recent initiatives.
- The Principal's inspirational vision for the academy has underpinned the remarkable developments to-date. Leaders have focused relentlessly on improving teaching and have a strong commitment to continuous professional development and targeted support for teachers. Best practice is shared well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Minimise the impact of attempts, by a small minority of students, to disrupt learning in lessons by developing additional strategies to deal with the most persistent misbehaviour.

Main Report

Achievement of students

There have been very substantial improvements in students' attainment since the academy opened. GCSE results generally have improved from being well below average in 2010, when 68% of students achieved five or more passes at grades A* to C, to around average in 2011 when the proportion rose to 79%. Mathematics has been much slower to improve than English due to staffing problems in the past but early entry GCSE results show a considerable improvement this year with 42% already achieving a grade C pass in mathematics which is 11 percentage points more than at the same time last year. In the past, most sixth form students followed BTEC diploma courses and pass rates are high with students making much better progress than their starting points would suggest. Students join the academy with significantly low prior attainment and the academy's rigorous tracking system shows that they are making rapid progress. Students made good or better progress in a large majority of the lessons observed. The vast majority of students show an active interest in the well-planned range of tasks in lessons and learning moves at a lively pace. Disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress overall and there are no established patterns of under-achievement. The gap between the attainment of students known to be eligible for free school meals and others was narrower than average in 2010 and widened in 2011, but results and internal data indicate that the gap will narrow considerably this year. Tracking data are used very well in all year groups to ensure that any gaps in performance are identified and addressed quickly. Almost all parents and carers agree that their child is making good progress and a very large majority of students say that they learn a lot in lessons.

Quality of teaching

Most students say that teaching is good and a very large majority of parents and carers think that their child is taught well. Inspectors agree. Teachers have good subject knowledge and a passion for their subject which they use to engage and motivate students. Teachers make very good use of opportunities to develop students' personal and social skills and to broaden their horizons. Teachers plan their lessons well using creative resources to stimulate learning. For example, students in an art lesson were given prayer mats and copies of the Koran to stimulate independent work on Islamic art. Teachers have good questioning skills and create lots of opportunities for students to work in small groups which they enjoy. In the outstanding lessons the needs of all students are met extremely well. In an outstanding science lesson, the teacher gave a very lively demonstration to capture students' interest then worked her way around the class with consummate skill giving extra support to weaker students, stretching the more able and keeping others on task with a

well-timed question or remark. Teaching assistants are deployed very well and liaise very effectively with the teacher enabling them to make a valuable contribution to students' learning, especially disabled students and those with special educational needs. One teaching assistant gave excellent support, using the sounds that letters make, to weak readers in Year 7. In the less effective lessons, teachers talk for too long or slow the pace of learning by repeatedly interrupting students as they work in order to check understanding. Marking and written feedback are of a consistently good standard.

Behaviour and safety of students

Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average. There have been notable improvements in the attendance of boys, disabled students, those with special educational needs and students known to be eligible for free school meals. A well-balanced system of rewards and sanctions has improved the behaviour of a large majority of students. Behaviour around the academy is calm and orderly, creating a safe and harmonious environment. In lessons, most students engage well, show a readiness to learn and work hard. A range of well-planned strategies and interventions helps students, who have difficulty managing their own behaviour, to improve. However, behaviour, especially low-level disruption in lessons, is the main concern of students and their parents and carers and inspectors found a small 'hard core' of students who persistently misbehaved and interrupted the learning of others in lessons. Bullying and incidents of serious misbehaviour are infrequent and are dealt with well. A very large majority of parents and carers agree that their child feels safe.

Leadership and management

The Principal, other leaders and the governing body have very clear aims and are driving improvements at a relentless pace. The Principal is supported very well by an outstanding team of senior leaders and a middle leadership team that is developing quickly. The Principal's ambitious vision for the academy is strongly reinforced by senior leaders and results in a tangible sense of confidence and purpose throughout the academy. Aspirations and expectations are very high and staff and students are responding very well. Staff morale is high. The academy appointed many newly qualified teachers who are developing very well.

Senior leadership is outstanding; members of the team have complementary skills and work very closely together to ensure a very consistent approach. Middle leaders are developing well and opportunities for professional growth are carefully designed to ensure continuity. Leaders have an excellent track record of taking extremely effective action to bring about rapid improvements in achievement, teaching and mathematics. The academy has addressed all the areas for improvement identified at the monitoring visit last year. Governance is excellent. The governing body is very knowledgeable and supportive and provides strong challenge if required. Members' contribution is supplemented by a similarly challenging yet supportive response from the academy sponsor. The academy has demonstrated an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Management systems and strategic planning are very strong. An accurate and thorough self-evaluation report informs the development plan that is very clear with responsibilities and success criteria attached to each action. The extremely robust tracking of students' progress informs self-evaluation and enables very effective and well-targeted interventions to be put

in place quickly. The new curriculum is very innovative and continues to evolve to meet changing needs. The new building was specifically designed to deliver the very rich curriculum that focuses on students' personal as well as academic development and contributes well to rapid improvements in achievement. The promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is skilfully threaded across all aspects of the curriculum. Equality is promoted well and data is used very effectively to identify and address any differences in performance between groups of students. Safeguarding is a strength of the academy and all requirements are met fully, including those which prevent discrimination.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



22 March 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Leeds West Academy, Leeds, LS13 1DQ

Thank you for welcoming us to your new academy. We enjoyed meeting you, seeing you at work and hearing your views. We would like to thank those of you who filled in a questionnaire and spoke to us. We took full account of your views and those of your parents and carers and academy staff who also completed questionnaires.

The academy has improved rapidly and is good. Here is a summary of our findings which we hope will be of interest to you.

- Examination results, the academy's robust tracking data and the quality of work in lessons show that achievement is good and improving, especially in mathematics.
- Teaching is good. Lessons include a variety of activities to keep you busy and you obviously enjoy learning.
- Attendance has improved and it is in line with national averages. Behaviour has also improved and your conduct around the academy is good. The large majority of you also behave well in lessons but a small minority deliberately set out to disrupt learning which is why we have judged behaviour to be satisfactory.
- The sixth form is good.
- The governance, leadership and management of the academy are outstanding.

In order to improve further we have asked the academy to:

- ensure that learning is not hampered by the small 'hard core' of students who set out to disrupt lessons.

The Principal and her team are outstanding and know just what to do to improve the academy even further. We hope that you give them your full support and wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jan Bennett
Her Majesty's Inspector

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