

Lees Brook Community School

Morley Road, Chaddesden, Derby, Derbyshire DE21 4QX

Inspection dates

8–9 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress across a wide range of subjects or year groups.
- Teaching is inconsistent within and between subjects, across the school. This means that the quality of pupils' learning depends too much on which classes they are in.
- Some teachers do not plan engaging activities or match activities well enough to pupils' abilities.
- The schools' assessment systems do not provide leaders and governors with an accurate picture of the progress pupils make.
- Disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils do not achieve as well as other pupils in the school. Actions taken to help them improve do not increase the standards they achieve well enough.
- New middle leaders are strengthening the quality of teaching and learning. However, they have not been in place long enough to have had a significant impact on pupils' progress.
- The senior leaders' improvement planning reflects an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. However, their evaluation of the school's overall effectiveness is too generous.
- Not all teachers have high enough expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct in their lessons. The new behaviour policy is not being applied consistently.
- Pupils do not receive high-quality careers guidance and advice to help them make choices about the next stages of their education, training or employment. New programmes have yet to provide the impact needed.
- Leaders do not always provide an appropriate level of communication to engage parents and carers in their children's learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders and governors are committed to the school. They are beginning to address the inconsistencies in teaching and outcomes.
- The 16 to 19 provision is good. However, opportunities to advance in English and mathematics need to be reviewed.
- Some teaching is highly effective and, where this is the case, pupils make good progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who make use of the enhanced resource provision, make good progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by :
 - ensuring that systems are in place to measure pupils' progress and provide leaders and governors with an accurate picture of the school's effectiveness
 - measuring the impact of the actions currently being taken to improve pupils' achievement, and using these measures to identify which actions are contributing to improvements
 - embedding the planned careers programme to help pupils increase their knowledge and understanding of what their next career stages are and raise the value they place on their education
 - embedding the new behaviour policy and ensuring it is implemented consistently by all staff
 - continuing to work with parents in helping them to understand what the school is doing for their children.
- Improve consistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by :
 - ensuring that all teachers plan work that is matched to the pupils' needs
 - helping teachers to structure learning so that their use of questions can help pupils better understand the learning process
 - providing stimulating and interesting activities to engage and motivate pupils
 - making sure that all teachers raise their expectations of pupils' behaviour in lessons.
- Improve pupils' outcomes by:
 - increasing the rate of progress that the most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils make
 - using the feedback teachers are giving pupils, to increase the impact on the progress that pupils make
 - ensuring that students aged 16 to 19 are provided with appropriate pathways to progress to a higher level in English and mathematics.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding 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

- Senior leaders have a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, the conclusions being drawn from their detailed self-evaluation are overgenerous. School improvement planning accurately identifies what needs to be developed, and this is well structured, but over time these plans have not been refined to take into account successes that the school has already achieved.
- From the time of the last inspection the actions taken by senior leaders to tackle the variation in pupils' achievement have not yet resulted in good outcomes for all groups of pupils. New senior leaders are working closely together to improve pupils' outcomes across the school. Pupils' progress, in a range of different subjects, is improving. However, this improvement has not been rapid enough and inconsistencies remain across different subjects. Initiatives are in place to tackle these inconsistencies, but some have yet to have an impact on pupils' achievement.
- Teachers' predictions of how well pupils are doing are not accurate enough to help leaders target any additional support required. The school's new assessment system needs to be a focus for leaders to improve the reliability of the school's predictions.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This includes the most able disadvantaged pupils. Weaker outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, when compared to others in the school and to non-disadvantaged pupils nationally, indicate that leaders' and governors' use of the additional funding provided to support these pupils has not had full effect. Leaders are unclear on the effectiveness of the programmes they use to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- The extra funding provided to help pupils with lower starting points in English and mathematics is not helping enough pupils to catch up quickly. This is particularly true in mathematics. The most able pupils are not consistently making the same progress as other pupils in the school across a range of subjects.
- Middle leaders are being increasingly held to account for the success of pupils in their subject areas. Over the last year, new appointments have strengthened this level of leadership and there is now a real desire to improve teaching and learning and the outcomes that pupils achieve. A planned structure for reporting to governors is set to increase accountability. However, newly appointed leaders have not been in place long enough to bring about improvements for all pupils in their subject areas.
- Leaders have a regular programme which is used to check the work of teachers. This is providing a more accurate picture of the training, additional support and challenge that teachers need. However, improvement in the quality of teaching is not yet widespread enough to create a consistent impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Teachers are being held more accountable for the progress that their pupils make. The school's revised process for the appraisal of teachers is intended to provide a clearer link to pupil progress, but it is too soon to assess accurately what impact this will have.
- Leaders use strong support from the local authority and teaching networks to improve their work and share good practice. Trainee teachers are well supported in their development towards becoming effective practitioners.

- Leaders of the special educational needs and/or disabilities provision ensure that pupils receive appropriate support and make good progress. This is equally true for pupils within the enhanced resource provision. They are fully integrated into the mainstream school. Additional funding is used effectively.
- A new curriculum offers breadth and balance. It includes a wide range of vocational subjects which help meet the needs of different ability pupils. A very small number of pupils attend alternative provision placements. However, the curriculum, as yet, is not inspiring all pupils to want to learn. Extra-curricular activities are used to increase pupils' knowledge and understanding and improve their skills, but the impact of these activities is not fully understood by leaders. There is more to do to ensure that leaders have clear ways of checking the impact of the curriculum on pupils' success.
- The school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural programme is delivered through citizenship and personal, social and health education lessons. This programme prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Displays around the school are used to promote and celebrate British values.
- Homework is generally set in line with the school's policy and reinforces learning.
- Leaders provide a range of opportunities for parents to engage in their children's learning. A few parents believe these are not as effective as they could be.
- Leaders and governors are ambitious for all pupils at Lees Brook Community School. Staff morale is high.

Governance of the school

- A significant number of the governing body have been appointed since the last inspection. This includes a new chair of governors, who took up post in May this year.
- Governors have undertaken a review of their practice, and training has taken place to increase their knowledge and understanding of their role. As well as supporting school leaders they are challenging them more. They have a growing understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are committed to improving the school.
- As a result of unreliable predictions, governors have not been provided with accurate information on the progress that pupils make. This has made it difficult for them to gain a clear picture of the impact of the school's actions taken to improve pupil outcomes.
- The school's pupil premium funding and catch-up funding has not improved outcomes rapidly enough for disadvantaged pupils and those entering the school at a lower level.
- Governors have been slow to challenge underperformance and to link pay progression to professional outcomes. New systems to check on staff and subject performance, and to hold teachers to account, have been planned. These have not, as yet, become fully operational.
- Governors fully support the school's ethos of inclusivity. They recognise the vulnerability of some pupils and the challenges that leaders face in raising aspirations.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a strong ethos of safeguarding. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are well maintained. Staff are diligent in their daily practice. They are aware of safeguarding issues and understand school policies well, including those raising awareness of the risk of radicalisation and extremism.
- The designated teacher for child protection and safeguarding ensures that referrals are

acted on in a timely manner and that concerns are followed up with rigour. Partnership working, with parents and external agencies, is effective in making sure that all pupils are supported and are safe. The school has an effective relationship with the local authority.

- Groups of pupils who spoke with inspectors said they feel safe in the school. Through the curriculum, pupils in the school develop a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations.
- A large majority of parents, through Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own surveys, agreed that their children are safe and well cared for.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Although teaching is getting better across the school, and pupils' progress is improving, the quality of teaching and learning is not yet consistently good across the school and across different subjects. Inspection evidence confirms that the quality of pupils' learning varies across different subjects.
- Teaching does not consistently meet pupils' needs. Teachers are aware of the need to plan for different pupils but they do not do so to full effect. Where pupils are stimulated and required to give of their best they rise to the challenge. This was evident in a Year 9 mathematics lesson on factorising brackets from quadratic equations. The most able pupils were successfully provided with more demanding work to make them think harder. However, this same level of challenge was not observed in a Year 8 music lesson, where pupils became disengaged during practical activities which were too simple for them.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' conduct and behaviour are sometimes too low. This was observed in several lessons. For example, in a Year 9 geography lesson pupils proceeded to chatter throughout the lesson and did not attempt to complete the tasks they had been set on volcanoes. In a Year 7 mathematics lesson, pupils lacked engagement and low-level disruption reduced learning opportunities. Where teachers' expectations are high pupils respond positively.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects. This is used to great effect to plan lessons which are interesting and engaging. For example, in a Year 9 resistant materials lesson pupils were engrossed in their work on bird box design. However, this was not observed to be the case in a Year 11 history lesson, where pupils lacked focus and motivation during a copying exercise.
- In a Year 11 English lesson, questioning was observed which improved pupils' understanding and addressed their misconceptions. Pupils were encouraged to draw out more developed answers as they discussed the text in their study book. However, this helpful approach was not observed in many other lessons across the school.
- In some subjects, such as technology and English, inspectors saw pupils enjoying opportunities for independent learning. These were used to develop and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. In other subjects observed, these opportunities were much more limited and pupils were not as motivated or stimulated by their learning. In these cases, pupils did not commit as readily to trying to improve their work or deepen their knowledge.
- Leaders have introduced a series of 'non-negotiables' for lessons such as pupils having

the correct equipment, maintaining minimum standards of behaviour, addressing basic skill learning and matching work to the needs of pupils. These 'non-negotiables' were observed in many lessons and had a positive impact on the progress that pupils made. However, inconsistencies remain in the application of this policy across different subjects and different teachers.

- Pupils value the feedback teachers provide. Many respond directly to the feedback they are given. This was observed in a Year 8 geography lesson when pupils quickly responded to feedback by adding further information, thereby developing their knowledge base.
- Teachers know whether pupils are disadvantaged, most-able or have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, there is still work to do to ensure that this knowledge leads to pupils learning as well they should.
- Homework is set regularly. It is used to assist pupils' learning. However, pupils told inspectors that they sometimes have to complete homework at school during their social time as it often requires access to equipment which they do not have at home.
- There are strengths in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in a number of subjects, including mathematics and English. This is reflected in the good progress that pupils make in these subjects.
- Literacy is being supported well across the curriculum. Pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar are corrected, and this is contributing to improved basic skills in reading and writing. Again, consistency of practice is required to secure further improvements. Daily 'drop everything and read' and library lessons are supporting pupils in developing their reading skills. The school's library is well used during lunchtime.
- The school has worked hard to explain the changes in its new assessment systems to parents. However, not all parents believe that this communication has been effective.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe and they have some understanding of how to be healthy. The majority of pupils and parents, and almost all staff, agree that the school is safe.
- Many pupils are welcoming and polite. Pupils get on well together. Pupils are tolerant of others and respectful of those who may look and act differently to themselves. Those who spoke with inspectors said that bullying was rare. They were confident that staff would quickly resolve any issues which may arise.
- Pupils' knowledge of spiritual, moral, social and cultural matters is delivered through subjects such as drama, philosophy and ethics in religious education, and personal, social, and health education lessons. This is complemented by a programme of trips and theatre visits, a selection of clubs and by pupils holding a few positions of responsibility, such as library monitor. However, opportunities to deepen pupils' understanding are not always taken. It is also too soon to note whether any significant impact has resulted from the introduction of the new personal, social and health education programme.
- Careers advice and guidance are underdeveloped. A new system has been planned to

incorporate this important aspect of pupils' education into the curriculum, but this is not yet embedded. Pupils remain unclear about career opportunities, especially at key stage 4.

- Alternative provisions used by the school are with registered providers. Leaders check these provisions effectively to ensure that the pupils are kept safe and receive the best outcomes possible.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils' attitudes to learning are not consistently positive. Where attitudes are positive they have a good impact on the progress that pupils make. In some lessons pupils do not arrive punctually or come prepared for their learning.
- Pupils behave well in confined spaces and respond well to staff instructions at these times. However, some pupils are restless during their social times. Pupils told inspectors that they would like more to do during lunchtimes.
- Leaders' tracking of behaviour shows a reduction in the number of behaviour incidents over time. In order to bring about further improvements, the new behaviour system needs to be fully used by all staff. Pupils agreed that the policy was beginning to bring about improvements but that it was not being consistently used by all staff. Pupils spoke to inspectors about the positive impact of the behaviour support programme.
- The school's policy on the presentation of work is not consistently implemented. Some pupils do not always take sufficient pride in their work, while others present their work very well.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly average. The number of pupils who are persistently absent has fallen. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, while improving, continues to be below national figures.
- Leaders are working hard to find creative solutions to address some of the most challenging behaviour. However, pupil exclusions remain higher than national figures.
- A small number of parents believe that leaders do not address behaviour-related issues well enough. Inspectors checked school records and did not find this to be the case.

Outcomes for pupils

Require improvement

- In 2015 and 2016 progress was broadly average overall. However, there is evidence of variability within the school. The progress of the most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils remains an issue, as does the progress pupils make in a number of different subjects. Most pupils make good progress in mathematics and English.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making increasingly better progress across the different year groups, but they do not make the same progress as other pupils in the school. This is because leaders do not evaluate the use of the pupil premium funding sufficiently well.
- The most able pupils do not reach the high levels of attainment of which they are capable because some teachers do not provide enough challenge in their learning. Lower-attaining pupils make broadly the same progress as others nationally.
- In science, humanities and modern foreign languages, pupils have improved, but are still well below national averages in both attainment and progress. Subject leaders have correctly recognised this in their evaluation reports and are beginning to bring

about the improvements required for pupils currently in the school.

- The school's information for pupils currently in Year 10 and Year 11 indicates a trend of improvement. However, the information for disadvantaged pupils, the most able pupils and the most able disadvantaged pupils does not show the same rate of progress as it does for other pupils.
- In key stage 3, the school's tracking systems indicate more variability in the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils. Year 7 pupils who receive additional support to help them catch up are not all making the rapid progress they need to make in order to do this. This is because leaders do not evaluate the use of the targeted funding sufficiently well.
- The differences in outcomes between boys and girls are closely tracked by senior leaders. While differences remain, there are clear indications in the school's information that these differences are diminishing.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who attend the school through the enhanced resource provision, make better progress than others in the school.
- Attainment in 2016 improved overall. Tracking information from the school indicates that this trend is set to continue. However, the trend does not yet apply to all groups of pupils.
- Leaders have worked hard to address pupils' reading skills. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to read. Inspectors listened to pupils reading and found that they do so with the fluency and comprehension appropriate to their age.
- Year 10 pupils have an opportunity to take part in work experience, which helps to prepare them for the next stage of their education, training or employment. In 2016, the school's information indicates that a high number of pupils have gone on to further education or training, including apprenticeships. This represents an improvement on the previous year.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Most students who attend 'the Skills Academy' have special educational needs and/or disabilities and have previously attended special schools. Their needs are well catered for and, as a result, outcomes in the vocational subjects they take are good.
- Leaders have high expectations, both of students and staff, across the Skills Academy. They rigorously check the work undertaken and have a comprehensive understanding of the provision.
- The curriculum meets the needs of the students. However, students told inspectors that they do not have access to many extra-curricular activities and would like them to be increased. The schools' homework policy is not consistently applied to help the students increase their knowledge, skills and understanding of the subjects they are learning.
- The positive relationships between leaders, staff and students reinforce the good progress made by the students.
- Teaching, especially in the vocational subjects, is enhanced by industry-trained specialists. Teachers assess the individual needs of the students accurately and plan lessons to meet their needs effectively. Teaching assistants and other staff are skilled

at supporting the students so that they are able to make good progress. This was observed to be very effective where 'signers' were supporting deaf students so that good communication could be maintained.

- Students' English and mathematics skills are not as well developed as they should be. This is particularly true for students who enter the Skills Academy having already achieved a GCSE grade. Progression routes do not always allow students to move up. For better outcomes to be achieved, leaders need to ensure that students have opportunities to be stretched in these subjects and that appropriate time is allocated to their learning.
- Students take part in an effective transition programme which enables them to settle quickly and make rapid progress. Retention rates are improving year on year, although they still remain below national figures.
- Progression routes, when students leave the Skills Academy, are well planned and result in many students moving into employment or on to courses at a higher level. However, the programme of careers guidance and advice and work experience is not well understood by the students.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. Staff deal effectively with those students who need additional support in managing their behaviour. Students who spoke with inspectors said that they felt safe and were very positive about how their personal development and well-being were catered for.
- Attendance has been a key priority in the skills academy and leaders have successfully improved the attendance rates of these students.

School details

Unique reference number	137420
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10019566

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1,151
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	66
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Ainsley
Headteacher	Zoe House
Telephone number	01332671723
Website	http://www.leesbrook.co.uk
Email address	zoehouse@leesbrook.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 December 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with DfE guidance on what academies should publish.
- Lees Brook Community School is a little larger than the average secondary school.
- There have been a number of leadership changes since the last inspection. The deputy headteacher at the time of the last inspection has now been appointed as the substantive headteacher. Other staff have been internally promoted to senior leadership positions and two new middle leaders have been externally appointed.

- The vast majority of the pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very small.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, supported by the pupil premium, is average.
- The proportion of pupils, supported by the school, who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is well above average.
- The school operates an enhanced resourced provision. There are currently 13 pupils, from across the city of Derby attending this provision. All these pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. They are integrated into the mainstream school provision.
- The school has a sixth form, the Skills Academy, which specialises in providing vocational courses for students who, in most cases, have very few prior educational qualifications. The majority of students who attend have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school has a small number of pupils who are taught off-site. These pupils attend Kingsmead Pupil Referral Unit and Rolls-Royce. Both are registered providers.
- In 2015 the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 53 lessons. Some of this learning was observed together with senior leaders.
- Discussions took place with school staff, the governing body and a representative of the local authority. A telephone call was made to the chair of governors.
- The inspectors met with four groups of pupils, talked to pupils informally, and took account of the questionnaires completed by seven pupils. Inspectors also observed tutor time.
- Inspectors listened to Year 7 pupils reading.
- The 61 questionnaires completed by staff and the 28 responses submitted by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account. Inspectors reviewed the school's own surveys.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a broad range of evidence, including: the school's analysis of its strengths and weaknesses; planning and monitoring documentation; the work in pupils' books; records relating to attendance and behaviour; and the school's own information on pupils' current attainment and progress in a wide range of subjects.
- The school's child protection and safeguarding procedures were scrutinised.

Inspection team

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Sharon Bray	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Holland	Ofsted Inspector

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