

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Leicester Partnership School

Carisbrooke Gardens, Leicester, Leicestershire LE2 3PR

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 February 2025

Outcome

Leicester Partnership School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils who join this referral unit have often had disjointed and negative experiences at their previous schools. This school has a strong commitment to improving the life chances and raising the achievement of its pupils, regardless of their circumstances. Pupils respond positively to these expectations and are happy at school. They receive careful support to adjust well on arrival. Pupils develop a sense of pride and belonging that enables them to achieve well.

Positive, trusting relationships are at the heart of the school. In lessons, and during social times, staff are ever present to ensure pupils' safety and nurture their well-being. There is a calm, purposeful atmosphere around the school. Pupils engage thoughtfully in lessons. They understand and respect the school's high expectations for their behaviour. If pupils occasionally struggle to manage their emotions, staff respond quickly and calmly to provide appropriate support.

The school's work to foster pupils' broader personal development is a strength of the provision. The school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop qualities such as resilience and empathy. Pupils learn valuable life skills to equip them for the world beyond the school. They learn the importance of healthy lifestyles and relationships.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Since the last inspection, the school's context, and the profile of its pupils, have changed significantly. For example, there are many more pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who now attend the school. Some of those pupils are awaiting permanent placements at specialist schools that are more suited to their complex needs. However, the school has responded very well to the considerable challenges arising from

its changing context. The leadership and staffing structures have been reviewed and strengthened. This includes the leadership of the provision for pupils with SEND. These changes are having a positive impact on the overall provision.

The school has embarked on a widespread review of the curriculum, to ensure that it is suitably broad and ambitious for all pupils. This review is in the early stages. The school carefully reviews pupils' needs on arrival to identify their unique starting points and any additional needs for pupils with SEND. This information is used to inform the curriculum, staff training, teaching, and any courses or qualifications that pupils will pursue.

In some areas, pupils already benefit from an effective, well-sequenced curriculum. For example, the school rightly prioritises English and mathematics. The systematic programme for the teaching of early reading ensures that any pupils who require phonics teaching can receive suitable support. In mathematics, pupils access courses suited to their needs, such as functional skills or GCSE qualifications. Teachers draw on their subject knowledge and regular checks to engage pupils and guide their learning. In creative and practical subjects such as art or drama, the curriculum is strong. Pupils produce high-quality work that showcases their knowledge and skills very well. Across some other areas of the curriculum, the provision is less consistent. In those areas, pupils do not always develop secure knowledge and skills.

Pupils typically join the school at any time of the year, often part-way through a term. Their placement at the school may be on a temporary, part-time or full-time basis. As a result, their attendance can be irregular. Nonetheless, the school places a high importance on securing the best possible attendance for all pupils. There are strong systems for supporting those pupils who do not attend as regularly as they could.

The school has revised its approach to behaviour management to ensure that there is a sharp focus on the root causes of any challenging behaviour. As a result of this consistent, supportive approach, pupils thrive and learn to manage their behaviour and emotions increasingly well.

The school prepares pupils well for their next steps beyond the school. The well-designed careers programme focuses on transferrable skills and employability. The school works with a range of vocational providers to give pupils purposeful experiences that are matched to their interests. The personal development curriculum prepares pupils very well to take positive roles in society. They are developing as thoughtful young citizens.

The management committee fulfils its governance role very well. Due to their considerable experience, members are very well placed to provide challenge and support for the school. The staff team is deeply committed to the school and the best interests of pupils. They value the training they receive, and the support for their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has undergone significant changes in terms of the profile of its pupils and, in particular, the increasing complexity of their needs. As a result, in some areas, the curriculum is not as well matched to pupils' needs, which can result in gaps in their knowledge and skills. The school should ensure that the curriculum is ambitious for all pupils, particularly pupils with SEND, to develop consistently secure knowledge and skills and achieve as highly as possible as across all areas.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness on 2 and 3 July 2019.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	131535
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10347499
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	117
Appropriate authority	The management committee
Chair	John Henrys
Headteacher	Shaun Whittingham Nicola Anderson (Co-headteacher)
Website	www.lps.leicester.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	2 and 3 July 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leicester Partnership School is a pupil referral unit that provides education for young people between the ages of 11 and 16 who have been excluded, or who are at risk of exclusion, from mainstream education. Some pupils with SEND are also temporarily placed at the school while awaiting a permanent place at specialist provision.
- The number of pupils on roll has increased significantly since the last inspection.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school makes use of 17 unregistered alternative provisions.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior and curriculum leaders. The lead inspector met with several members of the management committee, including the chair. The lead inspector held a discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons and at other times around school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Christine Watkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Karen Lewis

Ofsted Inspector

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