

Landau Forte Academy, Amington

Woodland Road, Amington, Tamworth, Staffordshire B77 4FF

Inspection dates

12 October–4 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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have only recently set in place adequate arrangements to ensure that the provision for pupils on part-time education is suitably monitored, evaluated and reviewed. The effectiveness of such provision is therefore unclear to leaders.
- The monitoring of programmes for pupils who go off-site for part of their education is not sufficiently rigorous.
- Although they are diminishing, there remain marked differences in the outcomes and attendance of disadvantaged pupils compared with other pupils nationally.
- GCSE outcomes have varied markedly between subjects. While English results have improved strongly, pupils' achievement in mathematics has been weak.
- The implementation by teachers of whole-school strategies to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not consistently effective.
- Too often, pupils are unclear about how to improve their work because they do not receive consistently precise and helpful feedback from teachers.
- In a minority of cases, weaknesses in teachers' planning and classroom management leads to pupils becoming disengaged from learning and making slow progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The academy trust's robust and effective action to strengthen governance and school leadership has made improvements in pupils' standards and behaviour.
- Pupils' behaviour is now good. Exclusions have now reduced and attendance is improving. Pupils' conduct around the school site is polite, courteous and respectful.
- Literacy is promoted well throughout the school and has supported improved standards, especially in English, including for the most able.
- Procedures to keep pupils safe on the school site are comprehensive and well understood by pupils and staff.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management, by:
 - strengthening procedures for checking on the quality of off-site provision
 - improving the monitoring, evaluation and review of provision for pupils on part-time timetables
 - ensuring that leaders and governors fully understand and implement their responsibilities with respect to off-site provision and part-time education
 - making sure that whole-school improvement strategies are implemented with consistent effect across the school.
- Improve teaching by ensuring that:
 - pupils understand how to improve their work by receiving consistently clear and helpful feedback from their teachers
 - teachers continually plan and manage their classes well so that pupils are fully engaged in learning and complete worthwhile tasks that extend their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Improve pupils' achievement, especially for disadvantaged pupils, by:
 - reducing variations between subjects in outcomes at GCSE, including by improving results in mathematics
 - ensuring that teachers adapt the support they give to specific pupils in class, in line with the school's guidance
 - continuing to improve attendance, especially that of disadvantaged pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The leadership and management of off-site provision, and of provision for pupils receiving part-time education, have not been effective in ensuring that pupils consistently receive the quality of education they should.
- Until the school was inspected by Ofsted in October 2016, pupils in the Link Academy, and some others, received part-time provision, and the effectiveness of this provision had not been reviewed in line with advice to all schools from the Department for Education. As a result, pupils have been retained on part-time timetables without a clear rationale for doing so and without a clear strategy for their reintegration into full-time provision. Subsequent to the first visit of this inspection in October 2016, the school has now amended its procedures. Most pupils in the Link Academy are now full time. The small number of pupils on part-time timetables will now have provision regularly reviewed, in line with guidance, although this new arrangement has yet to be implemented fully to ensure success.
- A small number of pupils go off-site for all or part of their curriculum, including work experience placements for pupils in the Link Academy. Arrangements for checking the suitability of this provision, including the registration status of full-time alternative provision, have not been sufficiently rigorous, and again have failed to meet national guidance for all schools.
- Beyond the concerns about part-time and off-site education, the curriculum is broad and balanced in most respects, and tailored to meet the individual needs of pupils. The 'personal tutor time' period in the middle of the day is an innovative approach that enables valuable and effective contact with tutors to support pupils' progress and well-being, to reinforce skills of literacy and numeracy, and deliver wider aspects of the curriculum.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is central to the school's ethos. Through a comprehensive programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), pupils learn how to keep healthy and stay safe. The promotion of British values of tolerance and mutual respect permeates the curriculum and assembly programme, and is reinforced by effective displays around the school. Careers information and guidance are key strengths that promote pupils' aspirations and ensure that they are well informed about choices by the end of their time in school. The aspirations of most-able disadvantaged pupils are further promoted successfully through the 'being brilliant' club. Pupils are therefore prepared well for life in modern Britain and for the next stage of their education or training.
- Leaders have a clear vision for school improvement, based on developing a positive ethos and effective climate for learning. The principal has been successful in securing the whole-hearted support of staff in this aim. As a consequence, staff maintain a highly visible presence during lunch and breaktimes so that they ensure pupils behave well and also take time to develop relationships by talking informally to pupils.
- Staff across the school have a high regard for the training and support they receive for their professional development. The 'Amington approach' has set out to ensure

consistency between staff in their general expectations of pupils and in the management and organisation of lessons. Middle leaders understand the importance of securing consistently effective practice within their subjects. While there remain variations in the effectiveness of teaching across the school, evidence suggests that the approach is increasingly successful. Leaders' success in recruiting and retaining a settled and specialist team of mathematics teachers is having a positive impact on improving provision and outcomes in mathematics for current cohorts of pupils.

- Leaders recognise the key challenges for the school in diminishing differences in outcomes for key groups of pupils and improving teaching quality, and they plan accordingly. Appropriate strategies have been introduced to reduce differences, although not all are implemented with consistent effect.
- School self-evaluation is overly optimistic because it focuses attention on the improvements that have been made in standards and behaviour from a low base, rather than benchmarking comparisons of actual performance with other schools nationally. This blunts the effectiveness of this self-evaluation in setting out the challenges ahead and in setting precise targets for improvements in key areas.
- The Link Academy has successfully retained pupils at risk of exclusion in school and enabled them to complete their education and leave with a valuable set of academic qualifications. However, the part-time nature of the provision and the limited contact with subject specialist staff until recently constrained the quality of education received by limiting the curriculum, including, for example, in the breadth and depth of the PSHE curriculum. This is planned to change.
- The impact of additional funding in the form of the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up resource is evaluated clearly by school leaders. Leaders recognise that pupil premium funding has yet to be fully effective in diminishing differences in outcomes and attendance for disadvantaged pupils, but have used their analysis well to inform new whole-school approaches to provision in class and to reduce exclusions. Year 7 catch-up funding has funded a range of interventions, including a whole-school reading programme that has successfully advanced reading ages and spelling scores. Gains in English have, however, been stronger than those in mathematics.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective.
- The academy trust moved quickly following concerns about very low academic standards and poor behaviour in the school in 2014. They appointed new senior leadership to the school in 2015, and established an interim executive board to work alongside a newly established governing body.
- The interim executive board, with the guidance of the academy trust chief executive, monitored the improvement of the school closely until a local governing body was restored in 2016. The trust and interim executive board drew successfully on a range of external advice and support to ensure that behaviour improved markedly, and teaching improved; standards have risen during the past two years.
- The current governing body is well informed and has built on the skills developed during the time of the interim executive board to maintain a focus on outcomes, including for subjects and groups. Governors know the school well, and challenge

leaders effectively. Governors have not, however, identified shortcomings in leaders' approaches to the management of part-time education and off-site placements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have taken prompt action to address concerns over the management of part-time education and off-site placements raised in Ofsted's inspection visit in October 2016. The arrangements now in place are adequate to ensure the safeguarding of pupils. New monitoring information will, however, need to be reviewed to ensure that placements are appropriate and successful.
- Within school, a culture of safeguarding is firmly embedded. All teaching and non-teaching staff have a very well-developed understanding of how to recognise and act upon any risks to the well-being of pupils, including through radicalisation and extremism. Staff training in safeguarding is comprehensive, both in its content and in monitoring for effectiveness. The curriculum, information for pupils, and ready access to the safeguarding team gives pupils confidence in their safety at school.
- The school liaises closely and effectively with external agencies to support pupils whose well-being is most vulnerable.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The effectiveness of teaching in promoting pupils' good learning and progress varies too much within subjects across the school. Whole-school policies aimed at improving pupils' learning and progress are not implemented consistently well.
- Pupils do not in all classes receive sufficiently precise feedback on the quality of their work to enable them to make improvements, in line with school policy. This leads, especially for the least able and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, to pupils repeating errors or misspellings. Where pupils receive clear feedback from teachers about how to improve their work, they respond well, reflect carefully, and their books show sustained improvements. This is particularly effective in English, especially for the most able.
- Leaders have produced detailed plans to identify and develop those pupils needing additional support in each class, for example pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, who are disadvantaged, or most able. The strategies identified to support these pupils are not, however, consistently put into effect. There are, therefore, too many instances where the least able pupils struggle to understand, and work in books is incomplete. Progress is much more successful where teachers use the information available to adapt work to meet pupils' needs.
- The school's new assessment system is mostly being well used to check on pupils' progress and to set clear and challenging targets for improvement. In a small minority of classes, though, pupils make slow progress because work and activities have not been planned well enough to challenge and engage them for the full session. It is then difficult for the teacher to manage the class to maintain a focus on learning.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are highly positive and, in most classes, this establishes a good climate for learning. This generates some dynamic discussion

between teachers and pupils that stimulates real interest in learning. Teachers promote very effective learning out of class through homework, e-learning, and supported study; for example, at the end of the school day or during tutor periods.

- Teachers promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills well through activities in their subjects. Very effective feedback on literacy helps develop pupils' writing, for example in science and English. Numeracy activities now feature widely across the school day and are positive steps towards supporting better mathematics achievement.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Checks on the effectiveness of off-site provision and of the impact of part-time timetables have not been rigorous enough.
- Pupils have a very clear understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. The curriculum gives pupils clear guidance in this respect. This is reinforced by posters in social areas around the school about agencies, including the police, that pupils can contact if they have concerns, for example about radicalisation or child sexual exploitation.
- Pupils told inspectors that they felt safe in the school. They know that they have ready access to staff in the safeguarding team at all times. They pointed out how the community police officer based in the school works closely with school staff to reduce the incidence and impact of cyber bullying.
- The large majority of pupils are highly motivated to learn and improve. This is demonstrated in personal tutor sessions, where pupils often independently select from a range of activities designed to boost their basic skills or take forward their learning in key respects. Pupils often collaborate well in lessons, rising to challenges when presented. They participate enthusiastically in the school's extensive extra-curricular programme.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct around the school site is polite, courteous and respectful. Pupils engage readily and easily with adult staff members and visitors.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They speak very positively about the very marked improvements in behaviour over the last two years, and how the site is settled and orderly. Pupils told inspectors that disruption in lessons is now rare and linked to weaker teaching, and this agrees with inspection evidence.
- Fixed-term exclusions have declined markedly during the current academic year, reflecting pupils' improved behaviour. The decline also reflects a positive determination of leaders and staff to keep pupils in school and learning.
- School attendance figures are not wholly accurate because the attendance of pupils on part-time education in the Link Academy had been wrongly recorded until inspectors first visited in October 2016. It is clear, however, that attendance, previously a key weakness, has improved sharply for most groups in the year to date. The number of

disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent, however, though reduced, still remains too high.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils vary too widely. Although they are diminishing, there remain wide differences in attainment and progress between key subjects and for key groups of pupils.
- The school's recent GCSE results demonstrate these differences most starkly. The last validated results from 2015 showed below-average attainment and progress for all pupils, with wide, though diminishing, differences for disadvantaged pupils. Performance was weak in mathematics, humanities and modern foreign languages.
- The latest, as yet unvalidated, 2016 GCSE results show that these differences remain. Attainment and progress have improved; progress is now broadly average overall. Pupils' progress in English overall was strong. However, progress in mathematics and in the English baccalaureate subjects (including humanities and modern foreign languages) was again weak. In the 2016 GCSE results, disadvantaged pupils again made much worse progress than others.
- For current cohorts of pupils, outcomes are continuing to improve. For example, a settled team of specialist teachers is now ensuring that provision in mathematics, along with a whole-school focus on numeracy, is strengthening outcomes, especially in key stage 3. In key stage 4, pupils' progress continues to have some relative weaknesses as a legacy from a high turnover of teachers prior to the current academic year.
- The school's actions to diminish differences in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is, according to the school's own progress data, yielding successes across most year groups. However, inspection evidence from the classroom suggests that learning and progress is adversely affected where strategies designed to identify and support these pupils are not fully implemented. Also, the weak attendance of some of these pupils is associated with slower progress. The spending of pupil premium money has therefore yet to have consistently strong impact.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are benefiting from increasing stretch and challenge in and beyond lessons. For example, one pupil was seen exploring different dimensions of a poem during independent work in personal tutor time that really advanced his learning beyond that in class.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is generally a little slower than that of other pupils. Although the school's specialist support interventions are having a positive impact, especially in literacy and numeracy, variations in the quality of teaching continue to affect pupils' progress in some subjects.
- Progress varies for pupils in the Link Academy and those in off-site alternative provision depending on individual circumstances. Overall though, these pupils benefit from engaging in the tailored curriculum provided and working towards important qualifications.

School details

Unique reference number	136136
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10025478

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	808
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Harrison
Headteacher	James Robson
Telephone number	01827 301800
Website	www.lfata.org.uk
Email address	lnicklin@lfata.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 December 2012

Information about this school

- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Landau Forte Academy, Amington is a smaller-than-average secondary school.
- The school is part of the Landau Forte multi-academy trust.
- Most pupils are from a White British heritage and the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- The school has an above-average proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

- The current principal joined the school in January 2015 and, at this time, the sponsor appointed a short-term interim executive board (IEB) to work until March 2016 alongside a newly established local governing body.
- Leaders established the school's 'Link Academy' in August 2015. This is an on-site unit for a small number of pupils who have previously been unsuccessful in school and who are at risk of permanent exclusion. Until the school was inspected by Ofsted in October 2016, pupils attended the unit for three and a half hours each day and spent the remainder of the day at home, completing work set by teachers, under their parents' supervision. Pupils now attend the Link on a full-time basis. Some of these pupils also complete one day of work experience each week.
- The school meets current government floor standards for the attainment and progress of pupils.
- The school sends two pupils to Tamworth Boxing Club for full-time alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was initially conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 as a result of concerns brought to the attention of Ofsted. Inspectors first visited the school on 12 October 2016, and then returned on 3 November 2016 to gather additional evidence. On this second visit, the inspection became deemed a full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
- Inspectors observed teaching in lessons. Inspectors also made brief visits to other lessons, including in the Link Academy. Other aspects of the school's work were also scrutinised, including personal tutor time.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and school staff, including senior and middle leaders. Inspectors spoke with representatives of the academy trust. Informal discussions also took place with staff and pupils.
- There were insufficient responses to the online Parent View questionnaire to provide evidence for the inspection. Evidence from the school's own survey of parents and pupils was examined.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and development plans, its safeguarding policies, and minutes of meetings of the governing body.

Inspection team

Ian Hodgkinson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Susan Morris King	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alun Williams	Her Majesty's Inspector
Peter Humphries	Her Majesty's Inspector
Martin Spoor	Ofsted Inspector
Gwendoline Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
Eddie Wilkes	Ofsted Inspector
Sara Arkle	Ofsted Inspector
Andrea Quigley	Ofsted Inspector
Josie Leese	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 learners 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 2016