

Landau Forte Academy, Amington

Woodland Road, Amington, Tamworth, Staffordshire B77 4FF

Inspection dates

1–2 May 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	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Until recently, leaders have not been held to account sufficiently for the impact of their actions. Some areas for improvement have not been addressed effectively.
- Leaders have not monitored the quality of teaching effectively or brought about sufficiently rapid improvements to the quality of teaching or outcomes.
- Some teachers do not address pupils' needs well enough or pick up on pupils' errors quickly enough, which hinders pupils' progress.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write at length. Teachers do not always insist on high standards of spelling, punctuation, grammar and presentation.
- Although improving overall, attendance for a small number of pupils remains too low.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to practise and apply their mathematical skills in problem-solving and reasoning tasks.
- Pupils' progress and attainment in 2018 were not good enough, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Leaders have not evaluated the impact of support and interventions effectively, particularly in relation to the use of pupil premium funding and actions to improve attendance.
- School improvement plans are not focused sharply enough on the key priorities for improvement and lack specific, measurable criteria. Leaders are therefore unable to demonstrate the impact of their actions effectively.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders from across the Landau Forte Charitable Trust have taken action to improve provision, following the disappointing outcomes in 2018. Leaders are now being held to account for the impact of their actions more rigorously.
- The improved curriculum is underpinned by a commitment to equality of access for all pupils to all subjects.
- Pupils enjoy school and say they feel safe. The majority of parents and carers value the support provided for their children.
- The school is calm and welcoming. Pupils are polite and respectful. Pupils' personal development and welfare is well supported by a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- There is some exceptional and innovative teaching that is worthy of sharing more widely with colleagues.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that teaching improves by making sure that:
 - all teachers address pupils' misconceptions quickly and provide pupils with specific guidance on how to improve their work
 - teachers adapt their teaching to address the needs of all pupils more effectively, particularly by providing more support for the least able pupils and those with SEND
 - pupils are given more frequent opportunities to practise and apply their skills, particularly through more opportunities for extended writing across a wide range of subjects and in problem solving and reasoning in mathematics
 - high expectations are consistently reinforced by all teachers in relation to the accuracy of pupils' basic skills, including numeracy skills, spelling, punctuation, grammar and the quality of presentation.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that:
 - leaders monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching more effectively and ensure that existing strong practice is shared more widely across the school
 - school improvement objectives are more sharply focused on the most important priorities for improvement and that plans include more specific and measurable indicators of success
 - the impact of additional help and interventions is evaluated more effectively, particularly in relation to the impact of the use of the pupil premium funding and the support and challenge provided to improve attendance
 - the school continues to strengthen subject leadership so that this aspect of leadership has a greater impact on improving the quality of teaching.

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

- In the past, leaders have not been held to account effectively for the impact of their decisions. This has resulted in slow progress towards improvement. This is starting to improve. The new chair of the governing body and the new chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust have set out clear expectations that improvement needs to happen more rapidly.
- Leaders have addressed some of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Pupils in The Link, an on-site alternative provision, now attend full time and leaders check the quality of off-site alternative provision more rigorously. However, weaknesses remain in terms of the quality of teaching. There is still too much variation in outcomes across different subjects and whole-school improvement strategies are still not implemented consistently by all staff.
- GCSE results for those pupils who left Year 11 in 2018 were disappointing. Trust leaders and governors have taken decisive action to address the specific causes of the disappointing results, such as weak leadership decisions in relation to GCSE options. Leaders have now ensured that GCSE options are appropriate and subject leadership has also been strengthened through accredited leadership development programmes. This investment in leaders is starting to have an impact on pupils' progress. However, trust leaders and governors are right to be determined that outcomes should improve further. They recognise that teaching needs to be consistently effective to secure strong outcomes in all subjects.
- Senior leaders are committed to supporting and developing staff. Teachers say they are proud to work at the school and that recent initiatives to reduce their workload are starting to have a positive impact on their work-life balance. They say there is a culture of professional dialogue now, which helps them to develop their practice.
- Staff receive comprehensive support and training for improving teaching and learning from other schools within the trust. Teachers moderate assessments and attend subject network meetings where teachers from across the trust plan teaching together. Learning support assistants (LSAs) have been trained to provide more targeted support for pupils who need to catch up in literacy and numeracy. This is helping to improve pupils' learning. However, leaders do not check the impact of this support effectively to ensure that the advice is consistently implemented by teachers.
- Leaders have not addressed the variations in the quality of teaching across different departments effectively. Although subject leadership is improving, leaders do not monitor the quality of teaching effectively enough to ensure that policies and procedures are implemented consistently by all staff. For example, LSAs and teachers provide effective support for pupils with SEND in small groups, as a result of the training they have received in specific techniques. However, in mainstream lessons, pupils with SEND are not so well supported. This is because some teachers do not adapt their teaching effectively to address these pupils' needs.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance is realistic. The school improvement plan identifies the correct priorities. However, the measures of success

are too general, with no quantifiable targets or time-limited deadlines. This means that there is not enough urgency to the pace of improvement.

- Leaders have not evaluated effectively the impact of the considerable amount of pupil premium funding the school receives. Funding is currently spent on a number of whole-school initiatives and interventions, which are undoubtedly of benefit to some disadvantaged pupils as well as other pupils in the school. Leaders were able to explain, for example, how these interventions were helping to improve attendance. However, as disadvantaged pupils currently do not achieve as well as they should, the impact on outcomes for these pupils is less clear. Leaders were able to demonstrate more clearly the impact of Year 7 catch-up funding on pupils' achievements.
- The curriculum at key stages 3 and 4 offers pupils a broad range of popular subjects, including creative arts, drama and engineering. As part of the trust's commitment to equality of opportunity, all pupils have a free choice of GCSE option subjects. As a result, when pupils choose the subjects they enjoy, such as art and drama, they generally achieve well. The curriculum in English is ambitious. Pupils study a wide range of challenging texts.
- However, very few pupils are currently entered for the English Baccalaureate. This is because only a small number of pupils study modern foreign languages to GCSE. At key stage 3, pupils do not study Spanish until Year 8. This has an impact on the take-up of Spanish at GCSE. Recent curriculum reviews in other subjects, for example in mathematics and humanities, are ongoing.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported. Through assemblies or 'gatherings' and personal tutor time, pupils learn about a range of topics, such as how to avoid the pitfalls of social media and how to look after their mental health, as well learning about different faiths and significant national and international events such as elections. They discuss topical news stories and are well prepared to take an active part in modern British society.
- During tutor periods, time is sometimes used productively, but this is not universally the case. Leaders acknowledge that, to ensure that this time is as productive as possible, they need to monitor these sessions more closely.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and priorities for improvement in the school. Together with leaders from the trust, governors are now holding school leaders to account more closely.
- Following the disappointing results in 2018, leadership changes have been made to ensure that standards improve. Governors and trust leaders clearly articulate their high expectations. The school receives comprehensive support from the trust in recognition of the need for further improvement.
- Governors ensure that statutory safeguarding responsibilities are carried out. The link governor for safeguarding meets regularly with school safeguarding leaders to ensure that safeguarding policy and procedures are implemented effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates. All staff, including restaurant staff and cleaners, are vigilant and well informed about the risks to pupils of abuse and neglect.
- The safeguarding team, led by the designated safeguarding leader, is tenacious in following up concerns about pupils. Comprehensive records show the wide-ranging support in place to address the needs of vulnerable pupils. Parents appreciate the support they are offered to help them to cope in challenging times.
- The head of school chairs the local schools' inclusion panel and the trust's safeguarding lead provides additional, robust support for this important area of work.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- There is too much variability in the quality of teaching across the school. Pupils are sometimes engaged and excited by their learning and teachers encourage pupils to celebrate their successes. However, this is not the case in all subjects. Pupils sometimes become distracted because they are not engaged as effectively by the teaching.
- Work in pupils' books shows that, in too many cases, pupils' misconceptions and mistakes are not picked up or noticed by teachers quickly enough. This means that pupils continue to make the same mistakes over a long period of time, which limits their progress.
- In mathematics, tasks are too often highly structured with the frequent use of step-by-step procedures, which means that pupils struggle to apply their reasoning skills independently in more open-ended, problem-solving and reasoning tasks. Leaders acknowledge that this approach has not helped pupils to develop the fluency they need to achieve well in exams. The mathematics curriculum is being revised to reflect the need for more open-ended challenges, but this is not yet fully implemented. However, work in current pupils' books demonstrates evidence of stronger progress in mathematics.
- In English, pupils enjoy the wide range of challenging texts studied across key stages 3 and 4. A love of reading is promoted across the school, particularly in key stage 3. In English, pupils develop sophisticated reading skills from the start of key stage 3 as a result of teachers' strong subject knowledge and effective questioning. This stands them in good stead for the demands of GCSE at key stage 4.
- However, pupils do not currently have enough opportunities to write at length. This is the case in English, but also more widely in other subjects across the curriculum. When pupils do write at length, teachers do not insist that pupils use consistently accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar. Consequently, pupils do not embed their basic skills through regular practise and application. Presentation in pupils' books is not consistently good because some teachers do not insist on high standards.
- In subjects other than English and mathematics, the quality of teaching varies greatly. In art, teachers assess pupils' learning very effectively to identify where pupils need

more support to develop their skills. As a result, pupils receive clear, specific guidance on how to improve their work and they achieve very high standards. The quality of pupils' artwork on display around the school is exceptional. In art, drama and PE, pupils enjoy their lessons and take delight in achieving success.

- Where teaching is less effective, pupils become disengaged because teachers design tasks that are not sufficiently challenging. In pupils' books, inspectors noted that, too often, pupils were set repetitive activities or short tasks that were quick to complete and which did not require pupils to think deeply or to respond at length. This hinders their progress.
- Although teachers have many opportunities to discuss their teaching with subject colleagues from across the trust, the existing strong practice in the school is not shared across departments at the moment. This is a missed opportunity for teachers to enhance their practice. For example, in some subjects, pupils are aware of their targets and how to improve their work. They talk knowledgeably about success criteria and can explain what they have achieved so far and how their work needs to improve. However, this is not the case in all subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The academy's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' personal development is well supported by the broad range of extra-curricular clubs and activities on offer. These include dance, drama, music and theatre, as well as a large number of sporting activities.
- Pupils develop confidence by taking part in high-quality theatre productions and concerts. Their horizons are broadened by visits to different countries, such as The Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland, as well as outdoor education residential trips.
- Through tutor periods and 'gatherings', pupils learn how to stay safe and why it is important to respect others. Incidents of racist or homophobic name-calling are extremely rare.
- Careers information, advice and guidance are well organised. All pupils benefit from an individual careers interview and take part in a work experience placement. A larger proportion of pupils than is typical nationally go on to positive post-16 destinations, including the local sixth-form college, which is part of the Landau Forte Charitable Trust, or to a number of local further education providers.
- Pupils understand about democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. These values underpin the trust's commitment to serving the community and raising aspirations. Pupils make a valuable contribution to the local community through fundraising activities. On Armistice Day, some pupils parade proudly in their cadet uniforms, which demonstrates a strong sense of civic duty.
- The student leadership team represents pupils' views in regular meetings with leaders. Pupils can bring issues or concerns to their representatives through student leadership surgery sessions. Pupils say they feel their voice is heard because changes are made as a result of their input.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school generally is good. Breaktimes and lunchtimes are calm and orderly, especially in the restaurant area, where pupils enjoy chatting and socialising maturely and responsibly.
- Pupils say they feel safe and bullying is rare. They say that if bullying happens, they know that staff will help them to sort it out. Pupils told inspectors that the school is welcoming and accepting. One pupil's view summed up the view of many by saying, 'It's OK to be different here'. Leaders explained how they have responded to pupils' specific needs by setting up support groups. Parents agree that this has been beneficial for them as well as for the pupils.
- Recently, there has been a temporary increase in the number of fixed-term exclusions. This was as a result of the introduction of a new behaviour policy which will take a short time to embed. There are only a few pupils who have multiple fixed-term exclusions. Alongside the new policy, a new system of rewards motivates pupils to behave well. Pupils like the fact that they can save up their points and select rewards online, such as clothes, books or decorative items for their rooms.
- Attendance overall and for most groups of pupils is improving and is now much closer to the national average. There has been a concerted focus on supporting and challenging the parents of pupils who have been persistently absent in the past. With the support of the local authority, penalty notices are now being issued to parents who do not ensure that pupils attend regularly. This is having a positive impact on improving attendance for individual pupils.
- Pupils attending The Link now attend full time. They are well supported to return to mainstream classes as quickly as possible. However, a very small number of pupils still do not attend school regularly. Leaders work tirelessly with external agencies to find solutions and to support these pupils and their families. Staff carry out frequent checks on pupils' safety and welfare. However, the impact of this comprehensive support is not evaluated effectively enough for leaders and governors to be sure that it is making a difference to pupils' achievement, as well as to their attendance and welfare.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils who left at the end of Year 11 in 2018 did not make enough progress during their time at the school. They did not make as much progress as those who left in the previous two years. Pupils' progress in individual subjects was mixed, with progress in both English and humanities having declined. Progress in mathematics has not been good enough for the past three years.
- Disadvantaged pupils have not made sufficient progress in recent years. In some cases, this is due to poor attendance, which means that pupils miss lessons and do not complete their work.
- For pupils with SEND who left Year 11 in 2018, progress was much worse than that of other pupils nationally with similar starting points. This is in part because some teachers do not adapt their teaching to address pupils' needs effectively and leaders do

not ensure that all teachers implement school-wide support strategies consistently.

- With support from the trust, leaders have correctly identified the reasons behind the disappointing outcomes in 2018. Poor curriculum planning, changes to GCSE specifications and weak subject teaching and leadership all contributed to the decline in results.
- Work in current pupils' books confirms teachers' assessments that pupils are now making better progress and a greater number of pupils are on track to achieve their GCSE target grades in 2019. This is particularly the case in English, mathematics, humanities and science.
- However, gaps remain in pupils' basic skills in mathematics. Some older pupils have not developed the fluency they need to tackle mathematical problems confidently and without adult support. This is having an impact on their progress and attainment.
- As a result of English teachers' strong subject knowledge, well-planned teaching and challenging texts, pupils make rapid progress in their reading skills. However, pupils' progress in writing is hampered by the lack of opportunity to write at length in English and in a wide range of other subjects. Teachers do not always insist on accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar or high standards of presentation in pupils' writing. As a result, pupils do not have enough practise in applying and consolidating their basic skills so that they become automatic.
- Across the foundation subjects, outcomes are equally variable. In some subjects, such as art, pupils achieve very well compared to other pupils with similar starting points nationally. Inspectors observed pupils' obvious enjoyment and engagement in art. In these lessons, teachers' strong subject knowledge and skilful use of assessment have a very positive impact on pupils' progress. This practice is worth sharing more widely with teachers in other departments.

School details

Unique reference number	136136
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10058476

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	831
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mike Davies, OBE
Principal	Sarah Findlay-Cobb
Telephone number	01827 301800
Website	www.lfata.org.uk
Email address	post@lfata.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 October 2016

Information about this school

- Landau Forte Academy, Amington is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school is part of the Landau Forte Charitable Trust, a multi-academy trust. The academy has a local governing body. The chief executive of the trust reports to the trust board on the performance of the academy.
- 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 proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The school has an on-site alternative provision, The Link, where pupils attend temporarily when mainstream lessons are not appropriate for their needs.
- The school has no sixth form but there is a sixth-form academy within the trust.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons jointly with senior leaders and subject leaders. Inspectors also visited The Link and the external pupil referral unit attended by a small proportion of pupils from the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 92 responses and the 42 free-text responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s parent questionnaire. The 52 responses to the staff survey and the 7 responses to the pupil survey were also taken into account. One letter submitted directly to the lead inspector was also considered.
- Inspectors met with the head of school, subject leaders, the designated safeguarding lead and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the Landau Forte Trust, together with a director of the trust. In another meeting, the lead inspector met with the newly-elected chair and another representative of the school’s governing body. The lead inspector also spoke to a representative of the local authority on the phone.
- Inspectors looked at pupils’ work and talked to pupils about how the school helps to keep them safe and how teachers help them to learn.
- Prior to the inspection, the lead inspector scrutinised published information and documents on the school’s website. During the inspection, inspectors reviewed the single central record and checked other records and the lead inspector read the minutes of recent governing body minutes.

Inspection team

Jane Spilsbury, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Rob Steed	Ofsted Inspector
Elizabeth Ellis-Martin	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Byatt	Ofsted Inspector

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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.

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