

Inspection of Leek High School

Springfield Road, Leek, Staffordshire ST13 6EU

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 June 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

The headteacher of this school is Kevin Graham. This school is part of The Talentum Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Ian Wilson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Richard Hey.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leek High School has turned a corner. Pupils now benefit from stable staffing, clear boundaries and a culture of mutual respect. Pupils feel supported and well cared for. They know that teachers have their best interests at heart.

The school has established high expectations for pupils' attendance and behaviour and for their learning. Pupils try hard to meet the school's ambitions for them. As a result, attendance is well above the national average, pupils behave well and they are keen to do their best. Pupils say they are proud to belong to the school. Work on the curriculum is taking a little more time to secure. There is still some work to do to realise the school's ambitions for pupils' achievements.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to expand their horizons. These include a weekly enrichment lesson, a personal development week and a range of trips and visits as well as lunchtime and after-school clubs. Careers education is well considered and well planned. This helps pupils have high aspirations for their future. Students in the sixth form go on to highly positive destinations.

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

Since his arrival, the headteacher has transformed Leek High School. He has carefully and systematically tackled the serious issues that dogged the school in the past and made sure that pupils, staff and parents are part of these improvements. Many pupils and staff members talked about how they felt part of a team that was creating a bright future for the school. Parents' views of the school are much more positive. Pupils are benefiting from the significant changes that have been made, including carefully considered alterations to the school building and learning environment.

Pupils follow a broad and ambitious curriculum. They can choose from a range of subjects at key stages 4 and 5 that match their interests and aspirations. In most subjects, the curriculum is well planned and sequenced so that pupils can build on their learning over time. Leaders have worked with staff to establish clear classroom routines. These have helped to ensure that classrooms are mostly calm so that pupils can learn well.

Teaching of the curriculum is not consistent. The school has made sure that it has identified the important knowledge that pupils need in each subject. However, teachers do not always use this information well enough to design lesson activities that are sufficiently focused on what pupils need to know. In some lessons, this means that pupils' attention drifts, and this impacts negatively on their learning. Teachers do not routinely check that pupils have understood what they have learned before they move on. They do not always use the findings of more formal assessment to adapt what they teach. This means that pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is strong. The school has made sure that pupils' needs are identified quickly and that the right support is put in place. As a result, pupils with SEND are now able to learn well.

Reading now flourishes in the school. Pupils are encouraged to read widely, and the newly refurbished library is a hub of reading activity. Pupils who do not read well are given the right help so that they quickly learn to read confidently and fluently, and they soon catch up with their peers.

The school rightly identified improving behaviour and attendance as the keys to improving pupils' experiences in school. Pupils have benefited from the significant improvements made to the learning environment. The pastoral team is relentless in ensuring that pupils are supported to attend well and in removing any barriers to their learning. As a result, pupils behave well and are keen to succeed in school.

The work of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) is exceptionally strong. The members of the board have great expertise; they know the school well and check the information they receive rigorously to ensure that the school takes the right next steps. The trustees work closely with the IEB. They monitor progress carefully and make sure that the school gets the focused support it needs. This enhances the positive leadership of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment is not used well enough. Teachers do not routinely check that pupils have understood what they have learned in class nor at the end of a series of learning. This means that teachers do not use this information to inform their teaching, and so pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The school should make sure that all teachers use assessment practices consistently so that all pupils achieve well.
- Implementation of the curriculum is too variable. This means that pupils do not always benefit from the high-quality learning that the school intends. The school should continue to make sure that staff have the necessary skills and expertise to deliver the curriculum well.

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	142711
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10332329
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	13 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	268
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	28
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Richard Hey
CEO of the trust	Ian Wilson
Headteacher	Kevin Graham
Website	https://lhs.ttlit.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	27 and 28 February 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher has held the substantive post since September 2023. He was previously the interim headteacher, starting this role in January 2023.
- The school is part of The Talentum Learning Trust.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- 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 qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school currently has sixth-form provision in Year 13 only. The sixth-form provision is due to restart in September 2025.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, art and health and social care. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the CEO, the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- 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.
- Inspectors reviewed school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and plans to improve the school.
- Inspectors met with trustees, including the chair of trustees.
- Inspectors met with all members of the IEB, including the chair of the IEB.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils at social times and in formal meetings. There were no responses to the online pupil survey.
- There were no sixth-form students in school at the time of the inspection.
- Inspectors met with staff and took account of the online staff survey.
- Inspectors reviewed Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Claire Price, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Adele Mills

Ofsted Inspector

Su Plant

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