

Inspection of Lea Hall Academy

Hallmoor Road, Birmingham, West Midlands B33 9QY

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 July 2023

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are not safe. Some staff do not fully understand their responsibility to keep pupils safe and do not challenge unsafe behaviours. Consequently, pupils' behaviour in nearly all classes is disruptive and at times chaotic. Behaviour in key stage 3 is unsafe. On too many occasions staff allow pupils to pick and choose what they want to do. The use of racist and homophobic language and swearing is commonplace and not challenged. Pupils show little or no respect towards one another and rarely follow staff's instructions.

Over time, leaders' ambition has been low, and almost all pupils receive an exceptionally poor quality of education. In response to concerns about pupil safety, most key stage 3 pupils are currently only expected to attend school for 50% of the time. There is a poor curriculum in the primary provision and none in key stage 3. Pupils learn very little and often learn nothing at all.

There is very little in place to support pupils' personal development. A small number of pupils benefit from specialist support. Pupils are not prepared for their next steps in education. When pupils are provided with positive wider experiences, they show what they are capable of. Their recent musical performance demonstrated that they can be engaged, appreciate others and achieve.

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

The school has faced significant turbulence in staffing over the last two years, including in leadership and management. The trust that runs the school has now stabilised leadership. Recently, leaders have worked quickly to identify and begin to address the significant inadequacies across the school. The trust has also provided specialist support to swiftly remedy some of the key concerns in safeguarding. The majority of staff recognise the importance of the changes that leaders are making and are working collaboratively with them to improve the provision for pupils. However, there is not a fully cohesive staff team working together for the benefit of the pupils.

Pupils do not learn to read well. The reading curriculum consists of a series of activities that do not address pupils' needs. Phonics is not routinely taught. Too many staff do not have the necessary skills to teach phonics. They do not have a clear overview of the sounds pupils know and what they need to learn. Pupils do not read widely and do not have sufficient opportunities to read in school. The books they do read are not matched to their ability. Pupils do not take books home to read. Staff have not created an environment to promote a love of reading. Pupils across the school make little or no progress in learning to read.

There is no curriculum in place for pupils in key stage 3. Due to concerns around pupil safety, caused by insufficient staffing, these pupils are only expected to attend school for 50% of the time. The education they receive in and out of school is

wholly inadequate. As a result, pupils are totally disengaged from education. Too often, pupils simply refuse to do any work. When this happens, most staff do not have the skills to motivate pupils to try again. Pupils in key stage 3 make no progress in their learning.

Leaders have recently ensured that there is a planned curriculum for pupils in the primary phase of the school. However, it is not taught coherently and does not take into account the significant gaps in most pupils' learning. Moreover, many teachers do not have the expertise to adapt learning to meet pupils' needs. In addition, expectations of what pupils can achieve are either too high or far too low. All too often, pupils are allowed to choose other activities, including playing, and so do not focus on their learning. Staff cannot check what pupils have learned or remembered because there are no assessment systems in place. The curriculum is delivered well for a very small number of pupils, and these pupils achieve well. However, most primary pupils make very little or no progress in their learning.

There is no consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour. Leaders' and staff's expectations have been very low, and too many staff do not have the skills to challenge and manage poor behaviour effectively, including the use of derogatory language and swearing. Consequently, low-level misbehaviour rapidly escalates as pupils push the almost non-existent boundaries as far as they can. Over time, pupils have recognised that they can avoid learning and following instructions by behaving poorly. This has led to a situation where pupils generally do as they wish. Pupils are entirely reliant on adults to regulate their behaviour for them because they are not learning to do so themselves.

Some staff do not ensure that they record or report physical interventions in a timely way, or at all. These interventions are not followed up appropriately. As a result, lessons cannot be learned, either by pupils or by staff. Inadequate management of behaviour has created an unsafe environment in key stage 3 and frequent disruption to learning in many lessons in the primary provision.

Pupils' absence rates, including persistent absence, are high. The reasons for pupils' absences are not recorded accurately. The most vulnerable pupils are monitored carefully when not in school. However, poor oversight of pupils' attendance means that there is a lack of targeted support to drive improvement.

There is very little in place to support pupils' personal development. In key stage 3, there is no personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, no relationships and sex education (RSE) and no careers education. Leaders are failing in their statutory duty to deliver these parts of the curriculum. Although there is a PSHE curriculum in the primary provision, it is not adapted to meet pupils' needs. There are some examples of positive, targeted interventions to meet the needs of a small number of pupils, such as through boxing and judo clubs to support anger management and self-discipline. Some useful links have been made with local agencies to help pupils understand how they can keep safe in their communities. However, these tend to be provided as a reaction to specific circumstances rather than as part of a coherent, long-term plan for pupils' personal development.

Leaders have not ensured that fundamental British values are promoted as a matter of course. Pupils are not given the opportunity to learn to be responsible, respectful and active citizens, and they are not prepared for their next steps in employment, education or training.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Too many staff do not understand and follow the school's safeguarding policies and procedures. In addition, they do not have a secure understanding of the safeguarding training they have received. Staff have not consistently reported all safeguarding concerns about pupils until recently. Some staff do not report potential signs of abuse. There are significant gaps in pupils' safeguarding records. This means that, in some cases, signs of harm have not been followed up appropriately. Staff have not responded to pupil absences well enough to ensure that pupils are safe when not in school. Some staff do not report all physical interventions, which means that leaders are unable to review incidents and check on pupils' and staff's well-being.

There is no coherent programme to teach pupils about how to keep themselves safe. Individual sessions are in place for some groups of pupils. For example, a local police officer works with a group of pupils about protecting themselves from knife crime and gangs. However, the teaching of safety is ad hoc and does not help pupils to learn how to be safe both in school and in the community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Safeguarding is not effective. Too many staff do not understand or follow the school's safeguarding procedures, and therefore they do not consistently report safeguarding concerns. This means that pupils are at significant risk of harm. Leaders should ensure that all staff understand and follow the school's safeguarding procedures to ensure that any concerns are identified and reported so they can be acted upon swiftly.
- Pupils in key stage 3 are currently only able to attend school for 50% of the time. There is no curriculum in place for these pupils. As a result, these pupils make no progress in their learning in any curriculum area and do not have the opportunity to attend school full time. Leaders must, as a matter of urgency, ensure that these pupils receive their entitlement to a full-time education and make sure that there is a suitable, cohesive curriculum in place for them.
- There is no structured approach to the teaching of reading, and too many staff lack the skills to teach reading effectively. As a result, pupils do not develop their reading skills or comprehension, which inhibits their learning in the wider

curriculum. Leaders should ensure that there is a coherent and robust approach to the teaching of reading across the school.

- The curriculum is poorly designed and does not support pupils' learning. As a result, pupils make little or no progress in their learning. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum in all subjects is coherently planned, sequenced and delivered to enable pupils to learn and make progress.
- Pupils' personal development is poorly supported and is not well planned or delivered. There are limited opportunities to promote their personal, social and emotional development. As a result, they are ill prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training. Leaders should, as a matter of urgency, ensure that pupils' personal development meets their needs to enable them to move successfully to their next step in education.
- Too many staff have low expectations of pupils' behaviour and do not insist that pupils follow school rules or use appropriate strategies to support them to do so. This causes significant disruption to pupils' learning, as well as the learning of others. Some behaviour, particularly in key stage 3, is unsafe. Physical interventions are not routinely reported. Leaders should ensure that all staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and can implement the school's behaviour policy effectively. Leaders should also ensure that every incident of physical intervention is logged and can therefore be reviewed.
- Leaders have not addressed the high rates of pupil absence, including persistent absence. A significant number of pupils frequently miss too much school, which adversely affects their education. Leaders should take all possible steps to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly and attend all lessons.

Having considered the evidence, we strongly recommend that leaders and those responsible for governance do not seek to appoint early career teachers.

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](#)' 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.

School details

Unique reference number	148722
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10300697
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	5 to 14
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	84
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Catherine Canty
Executive headteacher	Debbie Bailey
Website	www.fet.ac
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to an academy in September 2021.
- A key stage 3 provision was added in September 2021.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- At the time of the inspection, there was an interim headteacher in place.
- The school caters for boys with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not meet 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 does not meet its statutory duty to teach RSE and health education.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the education advisory board and the trust, as well as the headteacher, assistant headteacher and other school leaders.
- Deep dives were conducted in early reading, mathematics, history and PSHE. The inspectors spoke with subject leaders about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They also discussed the curriculum in other subjects with teachers. The lead inspector listened to a group of key stage 1 pupils read to a member of staff.
- Inspectors took account of free-text comments made by parents. There were too few responses on Ofsted Parent View for this information to be considered. Inspectors evaluated responses to the pupil and staff surveys.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders and staff about the effectiveness of safeguarding. This included meeting with the designated safeguarding leader to discuss record-keeping and talking to staff about training and how to record concerns. Inspectors spoke with pupils about how they are taught to stay safe. Inspectors reviewed pupils' behaviour and attendance records.

Inspection team

Ann Pritchard, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Mel Ford	His Majesty's Inspector
Gwen Onyon	Ofsted Inspector

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 <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

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 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023