

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Springwell Leeds Academy

Middleton Road, Leeds LS10 3JA

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 March 2025

Outcome

Springwell Leeds Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The executive principal of this school is Scott Jacques. This school is part of the Wellspring Academy 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), Mark Wilson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Cheryl Hobson.

What is it like to attend this school?

High-quality positive relationships are central to the nurturing environment at Springwell Leeds. Pupils engage well with all aspects of their education in the positive and calm culture. Staff understand what will work for each pupil. This helps pupils engage constructively with a broad range of subjects. The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement, and they do well.

Pupils appreciate the strong relationships they build with staff. They know who to share any worries or concerns with. This helps them to feel safe. Staff provide an environment where pupils develop their social skills and learn to manage their own emotions. Pupils understand the routines and boundaries in school life. Over time, their behaviour improves. Staff provide very high-quality pastoral support to pupils through thoughtful and effective interventions.

The school ensures that pupils participate in the wider life of the school. There is a great range of opportunities that promote pupils' personal development very well. Pupils enjoy the trips and other aspects of their experiential learning. For example, older pupils undertake visits to the local college. Art and music are used well to broaden the experiences of pupils of all ages. Pupils are prepared well for the next steps they take.

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

The school is highly ambitious for all its pupils, demonstrating a strong positive regard towards the well-being of all. Staff carefully consider the information in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans to ensure that the correct provision is in place to meet their learning, social and emotional needs. The school ensures that it has a comprehensive understanding of pupils' past experiences and current challenges.

Teaching pupils to read is central to the curriculum. Staff have the expertise they need to teach phonics well. Staff quickly identify any pupils who do not read as fluently as they should. They put in targeted support that specifically focuses on the precise areas that pupils need to work on. Subsequently, pupils' comprehension and fluency are effectively developed. Reading and pupils' language acquisition are thoughtfully threaded throughout the curriculum.

The school has put in place a rigorous curriculum that is appropriately flexible. Staff have worked diligently to improve the curriculum, particularly in mathematics and English. They adapt work consistently well as they support pupils. Teachers carefully monitor pupils' learning, including in relation to their social, emotional and mental health development. However, in a few wider curriculum subjects, the way that adults check what pupils know and can do is not as well embedded. Over time, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge in these subjects. Overall, pupils are increasingly ready to engage with, and succeed in, qualifications at key stage 4.

Pupils are consistently given opportunities to learn about themselves and build secure, positive relationships with others. Staff carefully consider pupils' additional vulnerabilities when helping them with sensitive topics, for example when teaching pupils about how to stay safe online and encountering life beyond school. Pupils receive personalised careers support to make their next step as well matched as possible.

Pupils can concentrate on their work as behaviour is managed well. Staff are clear about the behaviours that they expect from pupils. They act swiftly, using their expertise to mediate pupils' feelings and their environment. The morning routine allows pupils to re-engage with learning through safe spaces and a very warm welcome. Pupils learn to cope for themselves over time. They enjoy the opportunities to relax during breaktimes and lunchtimes, for example playing football together or sharing lunch with their key adults. The school has rightly made attendance a high priority. Pupils are beginning to attend more frequently. However, more work is needed in this area.

Staff say that the school cares about their well-being, as well as that of pupils. They speak highly about the support and opportunities they receive. The trustees and the trust and senior leaders have clearly driven improvements since the last inspection. They have ensured that change has been pupil-focused, sustainable and consistent across the three sites.

Governors have a clear and precise understanding of the school and its priorities. They provide effective challenge and support. This helps to ensure the school continues to improve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A number of pupils do not attend regularly enough. This means that some pupils continue to miss valuable learning. The school should develop its approaches to support these pupils to return to school regularly and often.
- In a few curriculum subjects, the use of assessment to support pupils' progress over time is not as strong as it could be. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and are sometimes not benefiting from being able to deepen their understanding. The school should ensure that assessment is used effectively to improve pupils' knowledge gained in these subjects.

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 in June 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	142630
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10346577
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	350
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Cheryl Hobson
CEO of the trust	Mark Wilson
Principal	Scott Jacques
Website	www.springwellacademyleeds.org
Dates of previous inspection	18 and 19 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of Wellspring Academy Trust.
- The school caters for children with complex special educational needs, including social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school has three sites in Leeds: Springwell South, Springwell East and Springwell North.
- There is an associate principal responsible for each site.
- The school uses one registered and six unregistered providers of alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 11 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, other senior and middle leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspectors held discussions with the CEO, the chair of governors and members of the local governing board.
- The inspectors visited all three sites that the school runs.
- The inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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.
- The inspectors reviewed the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum, visited lessons and spoke with leaders.
- The inspectors looked at records and spoke to staff in relation to behaviour, bullying and attendance.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including leaders' plans to improve the school and their self-evaluation of the school's work.
- The inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted's staff survey, as well as Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses.

Inspection team

Richard Wakefield, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Steve Kernan	Ofsted Inspector
Jenni Machin	Ofsted Inspector

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