

Levenshulme High School

Crossley Road, Levenshulme, Manchester M19 1FS

Inspection dates

5–6 October 2016

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher, executive headteacher, trust board and governors have worked with strength and determination to transform the quality of education and care provided by the school.
- Staff and pupils have a great deal of confidence in the headteacher, who has inspired their loyalty and respect.
- Levenshulme High School has moved from needing considerable support to being in a position to share its outstanding practice with others.
- Leaders and staff have created a culture which brings out the best in everyone, where morale is high, no-one is afraid to learn from mistakes and where parents can be sure that their daughters are safe from harm.
- The girls at Levenshulme High School achieve results which are much better than other pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- Funding for disadvantaged pupils is used very well so that nothing stops them from making as much progress as other pupils nationally.
- Staff give excellent support to the large number of girls who speak English as an additional language. These pupils quickly achieve a good standard of English and so are able to make rapid progress in all subjects.
- Teachers are highly qualified specialists who plan motivating activities which stretch the most able and support those who need help.
- Pupils conduct themselves extremely well in lessons and around school. They are polite, courteous and respectful, and work very hard to achieve their ambitions.
- The school has succeeded in its aim of promoting the emotional, physical and social well-being of every pupil.
- Staff give pupils exceptional opportunities to take responsibility for many aspects of school life. They are very well prepared to become the leaders of tomorrow.
- Pupils and staff celebrate the school's diverse and multicultural population and every kind of difference is respected. When pupils and families are vulnerable, staff take care of them with compassion and empathy.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that numeracy is developed across a wider range of subjects so that pupils develop the skills to apply mathematics in a greater variety of contexts.
- Continue to develop strategies to support the very small number of pupils who have not yet embraced the school's very high expectations of behaviour.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Since the new school opened in September 2014, the headteacher, executive headteacher, governors and multi-academy trust board have worked with strength, determination and moral purpose to transform Levenshulme High School. They, along with highly effective deputy headteachers and assistant headteachers, have ensured that pupils receive the very best education and care. They have created an open culture that enables pupils and staff to thrive.
- Working within the Education and Leadership Trust, Levenshulme High School's partnership with Whalley Range High School has been a key factor in the improvements made. Best practice has been shared across all aspects of school life.
- Leaders and governors have been successful in their uncompromising ambition to improve progress for all groups of pupils across all subjects of the curriculum.
- Leaders and governors have carefully planned the spending of the pupil premium to provide individual help from teaching assistants for disadvantaged pupils. This well-targeted support has resulted in ever-diminishing differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils at Levenshulme and non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.
- The school has spent Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding on well-devised intervention and support so that pupils targeted are now on track to make more-than-expected progress in English and mathematics.
- Staff identify pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities early so that the school can fund extra intervention and individual support. This use of funding has been effective in ensuring that all make at least good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders have ensured that provision for the large number of pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) is well resourced. The staff of the EAL department have the skills to support the development of spoken and written English and, as a result, pupils make outstanding progress. In addition, staff have the background and experience to support, with compassion and empathy, the emotional needs of those pupils and families who have recently arrived in this country having suffered a great deal of trauma.
- Subject and pastoral leaders have gained in confidence and skill and now play a key role in monitoring their areas of responsibility and ensuring that there is consistent improvement.
- Teaching and support staff have a high degree of confidence in the headteacher and senior leadership team. Leaders have inspired loyalty and high endeavour. One teacher summarised what many staff reported: 'My morale has improved so much since the new school opened. I feel that the headteacher has invested in my development and that she believes in me. That makes me want to be the best teacher the school has ever had.'
- Teachers report that senior leaders have maintained a very good balance between support and challenge in improving teaching. Increased staff confidence has motivated teachers to be creative and imaginative. Senior leaders have closely linked performance management to professional development opportunities within and outside school. This

has contributed to what is now highly effective practice across all subjects.

- Leaders at all levels use a wide range of carefully gathered information to measure the school's performance. The school has drawn on expertise from Whalley Range High School and organisations such as the Special Schools and Academies Trust to support honest and accurate self-evaluation.
- The curriculum offered to the girls is broad and balanced and takes into account their abilities, interests and career aspirations. The school builds on skills learned at primary school and has designed a curriculum which provides appropriate academic rigour, while fostering an enjoyment of learning. Through the curriculum, the Education and Leadership Trust has achieved its mission of promoting the emotional, physical and social well-being of every pupil and preparing the girls to be the next generation of leaders.

Governance of the school

- Governors and the Education and Leadership Trust have played a key role in securing rapid improvement.
- They provide a high level of educational, professional and academic expertise which allows them to achieve a good balance between support and challenge for the school. They receive good-quality performance information from the headteacher, executive headteacher and middle leaders and interrogate it rigorously to ensure that policies are implemented and targets are met.
- They ensure that the impact of all finances available to the school, including pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up, is measured against rigorous targets.
- The multi-academy trust has played an important role in creating the ethos and strategic direction of the school. Discussions and documentation show that lines of accountability, roles and responsibilities, and limits of delegation are clear.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have prioritised the safety of pupils from the outset and the school is an extremely vigilant community. All policies and procedures are up to date and reflect the latest national guidance. Staff are well trained in this area and are clear which procedures to follow should they have concerns. Effective links with external agencies are used when the school requires specialist expertise.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers are highly qualified in their subjects and use their knowledge to plan interesting and motivating activities which build on each other to help the girls to progress. Teachers' subject knowledge enables them to ask thought-provoking questions to check that pupils have understood, to clarify misconceptions and to deepen pupils' thinking.
- Teachers plan programmes of work which take into account pupils' abilities and prior learning. All groups are challenged and supported to make at least good progress. At the planning stage, teachers identify groups and individuals for extra support and challenge. Teachers are aware of what disadvantaged pupils, including most-able

disadvantaged pupils, need to achieve to match the progress of other pupils nationally. They ensure that extra resources, particularly teaching assistants financed through the pupil premium, are targeted appropriately.

- The skills which teaching assistants bring to the classroom enable them to support and challenge pupils through effective explanation and questioning. They generate very positive relationships with pupils and play an important role in increasing rates of progress for individuals and groups.
- Teachers use departmental schemes of work and policies well to plan work. This ensures a high level of consistency across and within subjects. In science, the policy of beginning each lesson with activities which test longer-term recall of key knowledge enables pupils to complete examination-style questions to a good level, long after the topic has been covered.
- Teachers have the confidence to be creative and take risks. They have very high expectations of behaviour so that no time is wasted during or between activities. They generate very positive relationships with frequent use of praise and humour. The girls work hard, with no distraction, from the beginning of lessons to the end.
- All subject teams plan very effectively to develop literacy. They teach key words and technical language explicitly and teachers routinely require pupils to develop their own definitions. Teachers in all subjects expect sustained writing with good spelling, punctuation and grammar. Numeracy across the curriculum is less well developed, although strong in science.
- Teachers put considerable effort into marking work according to the school's policy and identifying what pupils can do to improve. Pupils take the time to reflect on teachers' comments and to apply advice to future work.
- Teachers regularly set carefully devised homework so that it extends what has been learned in class.
- Pupils make the most of every lesson. They follow instructions immediately and listen to teachers and to each other with rapt attention. They cooperate with each other and share ideas very well. They are not discouraged when an answer is wrong but simply strive to understand their mistake and learn from it.
- Pupils present their work in an excellent way. They take good notes for revision and organise them well using highlighters, coloured pens, dividers and bullets. During lessons, they refer back to previous notes to help them understand new teaching points.
- A very wide range of sporting, cultural and academic extra-curricular activities attracts the girls in large numbers. Inspectors observed a house assembly when the senior student council explained how staff explicitly plan these activities to enhance resilience, organisation, presentation, communication, initiative, leadership and confidence.
- Teachers give parents regular information about how their child is progressing and how they might support learning at home. They have the opportunity to attend meetings to discuss reports in detail. Teachers give parents of pupils for whom English is an additional language individual time and support, to ensure that they fully understand what feedback from the school means. Written feedback from parents after meetings indicates that they feel that the information provided is comprehensive and useful.
- Teachers and pupils fully embrace the school's culture of celebrating diversity. Teaching strategies and resources reflect pupils' backgrounds and experiences and extend pupils' knowledge of cultures and religions beyond their immediate experience.

Pupils report that derogatory language is never heard in their school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The Education and Leadership Trust's core values of cooperation, self-reliance, teamwork and ethical approaches to business underpin much of the school's work in personal development and welfare.
- The girls are proud of their school and loyal to it. One pupil typified this view when she said, 'This school is my community. I feel an emotional attachment to it.'
- Younger and older pupils enjoy building relationships with each other through the organisation of mixed-age tutor groups. This arrangement provides opportunities for older pupils to support and mentor younger ones and to be inspirational role models.
- There is exceptional opportunity for pupils to become leaders in many areas, including each subject of the curriculum, the house council, careers, library and anti-bullying. Pupils take their leadership responsibilities very seriously. Inspectors witnessed many instances of pupils leading assemblies and tutor time when pupil leaders were confidently and articulately inspiring others to become the next generation of female leaders. They were encouraging the girls to play their full part socially, culturally, economically and politically in modern Britain and the wider world.
- Debating issues, formally and informally, is a routine part of the life of the school. There is a thriving debating society which has been recognised nationally as an example of excellent practice. Pupils do not shy away from expressing sincerely held views, while being careful to listen to others and to respect their ideas.
- Pupils confidently express their aspirations for sixth form, higher education and careers. They know how their own hard work will help them to achieve their personal and career ambitions.
- Pupils clearly express that they feel very safe in school. They are confident that if problems arise they will know whom to turn to, and they trust staff to help and support them. Lessons, tutor time, assemblies and special events equip pupils with the skills and knowledge necessary to keep themselves safe. They have appropriate strategies to avoid the dangers of social networking, mobile technology and being online. Year 7 pupils were able to explain how teachers have designed 'focus days' which are effective in developing pupils' awareness of how to keep healthy and to alert them to dangers such as child sexual exploitation, extremism, radicalisation and forced marriage.
- The school has clear and effective arrangements in place to ensure the attendance and well-being of any pupils who attend the alternative provision.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The girls have very mature attitudes to learning and understand the value of consistent application of rewards and sanctions.
- Behaviour in lessons and around school leaves nothing to be desired. Inspectors saw no instances of disruption, inattention or lack of respect. The opinions of pupils, parents and staff were gathered by inspectors from discussions and questionnaires. This information clearly shows that the behaviour seen during the inspection is typical. All those involved agree that behaviour has improved enormously since the school

opened.

- Across the school there is a culture of mutual respect. At social times, the atmosphere is very pleasant, with pupils acting responsibly and chatting to each other and to staff in a mature manner.
- Pupils respect their school environment and wear their uniform and achievement badges with pride.
- Pupils were polite and courteous at all times during the inspection. All pupils were very keen to discuss their school with inspectors and did so with maturity and good grace.
- Documentation shows that there is a very small number of girls who have yet to embrace the high expectations of conduct in the new school. Staff deal with these girls appropriately, using the school's well-devised procedures. There are no permanent exclusions and the rate of fixed-term exclusion has decreased dramatically since the new school opened.
- Pupils, parents and staff report that all forms of bullying have been eradicated. School procedures for reporting and dealing with bullying are robust and supported by pupils who are trained anti-bullying ambassadors.
- Attendance levels are high in comparison with other schools across the country. Attendance for groups who previously had lower levels of attendance has improved, so that their progress is no longer adversely affected by missing school.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils' books and school data show that outcomes continue to improve for all groups and across all subjects. Almost all pupils are making more-than-expected progress from their starting points.
- Progress in English and mathematics continues to improve in all year groups. In 2016, provisional data indicates that pupils made more progress in both of these subjects at GCSE than other pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- Pupils of all abilities read widely and well and make good use of the well-stocked school library. They read with confidence, accuracy and enthusiasm.
- Those who need to catch up in their English and mathematics skills do so quickly and are soon able to match their peers.
- In all subjects and in all year groups, the difference between the progress of disadvantaged pupils, including most-able disadvantaged pupils, and other pupils nationally with the same starting points is diminishing and, in some subjects, has been eradicated.
- The progress of the large number of pupils for whom English is an additional language is outstanding across all subjects. Some of these pupils have joined the school with little or no knowledge of English and, in some cases, with no experience of school. They make rapid progress in a short time and quickly catch up to the level of their non-EAL peers nationally.
- Analysis of the progress of individual pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities shows that all pupils within this group make at least good progress across all subjects, given their starting points.
- Across all areas of the curriculum, pupils develop excellent thinking and problem-

solving skills which enable them to understand subjects in depth and answer the higher-level examination-style questions very well.

- As a result of achievement in modern foreign languages, the percentage of pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate qualification has improved significantly and increasing proportions of current pupils are now on track to achieve it.
- Very well-planned and well-resourced careers education, information, advice and guidance ensure that pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education. Since the school opened, figures for pupils not in education, employment or training when they leave school have decreased dramatically and are now well below the national average.

School details

Unique reference number	141196
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10022811

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,010
Appropriate authority	The Education and Leadership Trust
Chair	Emma Antrobus
Headteacher	Dr Johan MacKinnon
Telephone number	0161 224 4625
Website	www.levenshulmehigh.co.uk/
Email address	office@levenshulmehigh.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Levenshulme High School is an average-sized, all-girls, 11 to 16 secondary comprehensive school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is high and includes almost half of the school.
- The very great majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, the largest of which are Pakistani and Bangladeshi. The proportion of pupils whose first language is believed not to be English is very high. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than average.
- For a very small number of pupils, the school uses alternative provision which it manages itself in conjunction with Whalley Range High School.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum

expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

- As part of the Education and Leadership Trust, the school has been supported by Whalley Range High School.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classrooms to observe teaching and pupils' learning. Six of these lesson observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors observed and spoke to pupils during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors met formally with five groups of pupils and heard pupils read. They considered responses to the Ofsted pupil questionnaire.
- Discussions were held with staff, middle and senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the multi-academy trust board.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including arrangements for safeguarding. They took account of school information about pupils' outcomes and scrutinised pupils' books.
- Inspectors considered the 15 responses to Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire), including 11 free-text comments. In addition, inspectors considered information which the school had gathered from its own parental questionnaires.

Inspection team

Liz Kelly, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Dympna Woods	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Ruddy	Ofsted Inspector
Annette Patterson	Ofsted Inspector

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