

# LeAF Studio

Holloway Avenue, Bournemouth, BH11 9JW

**Inspection dates** 18–19 November 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b> <b>2</b>
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Sixth form provision	Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Students achieve well. All students make good progress in their academic studies, particularly in English.
- Students achieve significantly better than others nationally in vocational GCSEs related to their specialism. All the elite sports students are participating at a high level in their chosen discipline.
- Students are taught well. Teachers are skilled at providing tasks that best fit the students' needs.
- Students are highly motivated. They are diligent in their academic studies and totally committed to their specialist training.
- Students are guided well by their tutors to make good use of the extended school day to improve their skills.
- Students behave well. They show good awareness of how to keep safe in and out of school.
- The Principal is passionate about the benefits of the studio school. She ensures everyone's efforts focus sharply on students' requirements.
- Senior leaders have successfully concentrated on improving teaching and learning. They have implemented tight systems for checking up on students' progress.
- The sixth form is good. It is effective in providing students with the skills required to continue studying in higher education or employment in the sports related sector.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The advice and guidance offered to performing arts students lacks clarity.
- In lessons, teachers sometimes readily accept shallow answers to questions. This does not help students think more deeply and develop their own ideas.
- Some teachers' marking is not helping students improve their work.
- Governors do not have all the information they need to appropriately challenge the school leaders.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 28 lessons. In six of these, inspectors were joined by either the Principal or Vice-Principal.
- The inspectors took account of 32 responses to the online Parent View survey, as well as discussions with five parents invited by the school. They also considered the responses to 23 staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors talked with three groups of students as well as with individual students during their lessons and at break time. Inspectors looked at work in students' books.
- Inspectors held discussions with the Principal, teachers, the designated safeguarding leader, senior and middle leaders, and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Federation board. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including documents relating to the funding of the studio, students' attainment and progress, child protection and safeguarding, the school's curriculum, the management of teachers' performance and the school's plans for improvement.

## Inspection team

Jonathan Palk, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Elizabeth Bull

Additional Inspector

Christina Christou

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The LeAF Studio School is smaller than most secondary schools.
- The Studio School opened in September 2012 as a 'school within a school' in the Oak Academy. It moved into a brand new building in September 2013 on the Oak Academy campus. The school is part of the Oak 3 to 19 Learning and Achievement Federation.
- The school provides an education for 14-to-19-year-olds within a vocational context. It specialises in two main areas: a sports offer based around an elite academy for a wide range of sports, and a stage and screen offer, which includes performing arts and digital media.
- The proportions of disabled students and those who have special educational needs are below average.
- About two fifths of the students are eligible for the pupil premium, which is above average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The vast majority of pupils are from a White British background.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that all teaching is good or better by:
  - helping students develop their answers to questions so they think more deeply and teachers can assess how well they are learning
  - providing students with regular feedback on their work, making sure that it helps them understand what they need to do to improve their work.
- Improve the guidance offered to students on the performing arts courses in the sixth form by:
  - monitoring and tracking of students' progress towards successful employability in the performing arts industries
  - setting detailed goals for students and incorporating these into workshops and lessons.
- Provide governors with the analytical information that underpins the school's self-evaluation so they can challenge with greater independence.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The Principal is ever-present around the school. She knows all the students personally and their families. She is passionate about providing students with the chance to fulfil their ambitions, irrespective of their background and sometimes low starting points. To this end, she is continually on the search to secure the services of the best coaches and trainers she can find.
- Senior leaders have had a positive impact on the school's work. Through careful analysis, training and targeted support, they have improved attainment across all subjects. Far more pupils are now working at the right levels for their age than they were when they joined the school.
- The revised systems for tracking students' progress in academic subjects provide an early warning of students who may not reach their aspirational targets in GCSEs and A levels. The successful support programme for academic studies is fitted in well around students' busy sporting and performing arts programmes. Clear communication between staff and students of aspirational targets is evident in the students requesting additional lessons.
- The well-designed curriculum ensures a wide subject choice and caters for the students' aesthetic and sporting talents. The curriculum provides a rich variety of experiences in and out of school that expands students' horizons and understanding of other cultures. Students are immersed in numerous collaborative experiences that help them acquire a deep respect for others and develop their moral purpose.
- School leaders have quickly developed a system to manage staff performance as an effective tool for improving teaching and learning. Staff professional development is linked to the aspirational targets staff have of the students. Leaders identify any weaknesses in teaching quickly and provide teachers with the required support.
- The school has rigorous systems in place to ensure that safeguarding and child protection arrangements meet statutory requirements. There is excellent oversight of the procedures by governors.
- All the questionnaires returned by staff were fully supportive of the school. A very large majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire are also very supportive of the school and would recommend it to others.
- School evaluation is accurate. The information underpinning the school's assessment of its performance is not recorded in enough detail. Consequently, governors find it hard to challenge school leaders and hold them fully to account.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The Federation board has recently set up a local governing body for the school. The governing body has recently reviewed how it operates. As a consequence, governors have sharpened their focus on students' achievement and the quality of teaching.
  - Governors are experienced and perceptive. They have sufficient information on students' academic achievement to judge how well the students are performing compared with others nationally. They ask questions about how well disadvantaged students are making progress and how their provision can be made more effective. They take a strong line on eradicating weak teaching and give complete support to the Principal in recruitment.
  - There is a deep understanding of safeguarding procedures and practice. Governors are kept abreast of all updates from the local safeguarding children's board. There are a high proportion of governors with training to carry out the safe recruitment of staff.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school curriculum successfully engages the interest of students. They can see the purpose of their learning, and that in turn inspires them to succeed. Students show outstanding collaboration and co-operation when working with their peer group and others of different ages and backgrounds.
- The Principal and school staff are successful in setting out to teach students what their responsibilities are as members of the school and global community. Students give their time to participate in many fund-raising ventures, often linked directly to their vocational programmes. Displays around the school signal the importance of being different. These messages reinforce the personal esteem and self-worth students exhibit.
- In between lessons and at break times and lunchtimes, students move amiably around the building. They

are trusted by staff to go anywhere in the building because they look after it. Discrete staff supervision means students always have easy access to help.

- The strong motivation to pursue their sporting and performing arts ambitions, combined with excellent resources, means the school is a delightful place to learn. A very high proportion of students come to school early and stay late, either to attend formal lessons or enjoy the company of friends.
- Students are sometimes late for lessons. Staff overrun lesson times and students are leisurely moving between classes. Students join classes after they have started but rarely apologise to the adult for their late arrival.
- There are no exclusions and students' attendance is average. Attendance is improving because the school is reducing persistent absence.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. There are effective systems covering all aspects of safeguarding. Students understand the layers of responsibility staff have for their safety and have no hesitation in taking concerns to them.
- There is a strong culture of teaching the students to share responsibility for their own and others' safety. Teachers regularly remind students of the steps they must take to keep themselves safe when using mobile phones and computers. For example, Year 10 students had to complete an e-safety task before they used the internet for research.
- There is a room set aside for students to meet with trained staff to talk through any issues or concerns. This service is highly effective in keeping students on track towards their academic and vocational goals.
- Students are taught about the strategies people use to influence their views through the internet. One of the topics they cover each year explores the radicalisation of young people. In their tutor times, students maturely discuss these issues and others associated with using social media.
- Students and parents understand the risks involved in performing arts and sport. Students learn from experts how to minimise the physical risks associated with competing and performing at a high level. Students' and parents report that staff are always present when they attend shows, rehearsals and competitions on and off campus. This helps them feel safe.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- In most lessons, planning is detailed with a variety of activities that interest and engage. Teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve and work hard to make sure lessons are interesting, challenging and enjoyable. Teamworking is encouraged and students are open about any difficulties that they have understanding their work. Students speak with pride about their high-quality work in projects.
- The expert teaching in the sports and performing arts studio is of high quality. Lessons successfully focus on practical skills development. There is no reticence on the part of tutors for celebrating high standards. Good technical advice supports students' aspirations and collaborative skills.
- Good teaching of English is evident in the improvement in the proportions making more than expected progress. Regular intensive reading for those who may be struggling to acquire knowledge of how sounds link to letters is successful. Students get the time to complete extended pieces of writing across a range of subjects. Students check each other's pieces of writing so that their work is revised continually, resulting in high-quality pieces produced before the end of the topic. The personal satisfaction this generates only serves to strengthen students' resolve to do even better.
- The more-able students are encouraged to take the initiative in lessons. They frequently take the lead in developing ideas and shaping the lesson. Teachers are quick to adjust the learning objectives to meet their needs.
- Improvements in mathematics teaching are beginning to have an impact on students' achievement but the school rightly recognises there is some way to go. There is an over-reliance on additional tutorials to tackle students' misunderstandings and confront the gaps in their skills.
- Where students make limited progress, it is because the teachers do not use their knowledge of students' previous learning during discussions in the lesson. Generalised questioning does not succeed in underpinning students' knowledge and understanding.
- Students' work is marked regularly, although there are inconsistencies in its quality. Teachers do not habitually provide the guidance students need to improve.

**The achievement of pupils is good**

- All groups of students, including those with special educational needs, and those from below, average and above-average starting points made much better than average progress in all subjects with the exception of mathematics. Progress measures put the school in the top 5% of all schools nationally. Typically, students attain one grade higher than would be expected nationally from their individual starting points.
- In 2013, disadvantaged students' progress was much greater than for this group nationally. They are continuing to make good progress. The analysis of the 2014 results shows that there is very little difference between the attainment of students who are disadvantaged and others. The school has used the additional funding to provide these students with an effective personalised tutoring programme.
- The few disabled students and those with special educational needs also make some impressive progress across a full range of subjects. The school is particularly effective at tackling low literacy standards through the use of individual coaching in reading and writing.
- The most important factors in students' rising achievement are motivation and good teaching. Spurred on by success in their chosen specialism, they are motivated to do well academically.
- Although attainment is below average, it is improving. Students make good progress from starting points which are typically well below average. Achievement has improved greatly in English but it is less strong in mathematics. The recent staff appointments to the mathematics department and strong leadership are helping eradicate a legacy of weak achievement in mathematics.

**The sixth form provision is good**

- The effectiveness of sixth form provision is good.
- The sixth form is smaller than average and provides an environment where students feel both secure and challenged. There are very successful arrangements for academic and personal tutoring that align with those in place for all students at the school.
- The sixth form curriculum meets the requirements for 16–19 study skills.
- Effective teaching and well-paced activities engage and challenge students. Students interact well with their teachers and their peers to push themselves to achieve and perform as well as they can.
- From lower than average starting points, students attain in line with national averages. Rates of progress are significantly higher in the vocational courses. Retention is much higher than the national average.
- Students following the elite sports programmes are provided with very effective advice and guidance. These students have a very clear understanding of their progress and destination opportunities. They gain a wealth of experience working in the sports sector. This ranges from leading events and competitions in the locality to their participation in youth development squads at national level. This aspect of the sixth form provision is exceedingly strong and builds on the prestigious links established over recent years with National Youth development programmes and higher education establishments.
- The performing arts department is in its second year. The advice offered to students on progress is largely informal. Tutors make insufficient use of previously determined targets for students when teaching. The links with higher education establishments and specialist schools providing specialist dance and drama at higher levels are not extensive.
- Leaders are developing community performance links. Partnerships with arts agencies, that give students access to an appropriate range of specialist workshops, are embryonic. There is good enrichment provided by initiatives such as entry to national competitions and additional workshops in dance companies. Less developed is the enrichment in music and acting.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138385
<b>Local authority</b>	Bournemouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	430678

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Studio School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	14–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	310
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	136
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Edward Craven
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dr Annetta Minard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01202 578886
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