

Horsforth School

Lee Lane East, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS18 5RF

Inspection dates

12–13 December 2013

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Not previously inspected | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The sixth form is outstanding, as demonstrated by students' outstanding achievement.
- The behaviour of students is outstanding because they listen exceptionally well in lessons and are keen to produce their best work.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 in English and mathematics is above average and has improved since 2012.
- Most students make faster progress than students nationally because the school checks constantly that they are learning successfully and, if not, provides additional teaching.
- Teaching is good and a small minority is outstanding, so most students make good progress in a range of subjects.
- Most teachers make sure that most students maintain the best standards in their work and arrange extra teaching if students' progress falters.
- Students show respect for each other and for adults in the school. A very large majority of students say they feel safe and secure in the school.
- Leaders and managers are clear about how to improve the learning of most students in the school. They have high expectations of the effort students make in lessons and make sure students who fall behind are given extra help.
- Leaders, managers and governors have improved teaching in the last year so more students have made better progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students supported by pupil premium funding do not attain the standards reached by most students in the school.
- Feedback to students by teachers about their written work varies and not enough teachers give clear and specific suggestions about how students can improve.
- Leaders and managers need to further improve the teaching of students supported by pupil premium funding so their progress matches that of all students in the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 45 teaching sessions and 45 teachers. Six were observed jointly by the headteacher and four senior leaders. Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and senior and other leaders about teaching, attendance, behaviour and safeguarding and about assessment and students' progress. They also talked to students in lessons informally, to several groups of students, to the Chair of the Governing Body and Director of the School's Trust, the chair of the pastoral committee, community governor and Director of the School's Trust, the chair of the curriculum committee, community governor and Director of the School's Trust, a community governor and Director of the School's Trust, the local authority School Improvement Adviser and the co-headteachers of a partner school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of written work, data from assessments and school records to measure improvement in students' progress, behaviour, teaching and the curriculum and safeguarding documents. They also looked closely at the school's evaluation of its work and the school's plans for further improvement.
- The responses of 53 staff to the inspection questionnaire were considered. The inspectors also took into account the school's records of 179 parents' views and 56 parents' responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors responded to emails and telephone calls from parents.

Inspection team

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Nell Banfield, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Irene Lavelle | Additional Inspector |
| Paul Copping | Additional Inspector |
| Peter Cox | Additional Inspector |
| Mary Lanovy-Taylor | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- Horsforth School is a larger than average-sized secondary school.
- The school converted to become an academy on January 2012. When its predecessor school, also called Horsforth School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is smaller than that found nationally.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is lower than that found nationally.
- The vast majority of students are of White British heritage and a small proportion of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is lower than that found nationally. This is additional funding for those students known to be eligible for free school meals, for students who are looked after by the local authority and for the children of service families.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school works in partnership with the local authority.
- The school has a collaborative arrangement with a partner school's sixth form and a number of students from both schools follow courses on each site to extend their curriculum choice.
- The school has a central role in the Red Kite Teaching Alliance and works closely with a number of primary and secondary schools and with a sixth form of a partner school. It is also a lead school for the Red Kite Schools Direct Initial Teacher Training Programme and in the local authority's training programme for serving mathematics teachers.
- The school holds a number of awards including Artsmark, Sportsmark, Healthy School status, Standard for Careers Guidance, International Schools Award and is a specialist science college.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching which accelerates the progress of students, particularly those supported by the pupil premium funding, by:
 - planning tasks and activities that reflect the relative starting points of students in the lesson
 - making sure teachers monitor the progress of students supported by the pupil premium funding during lessons as well as over time
 - closing the attainment gap between those supported by pupil premium and their peers
 - giving students more precise feedback on their written work so they know which aspects of their learning they have mastered and making specific suggestions about what they need to do to reach the next stage in their learning.
- Ensuring all leaders and managers, including subject leaders, accurately evaluate the progress made in lessons by students supported through pupil premium funding and make sure lessons in all subjects are structured to increase the progress of this group of students.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students enter the school with standards above those of students nationally in English and in mathematics. The school improved students' attainment in 2013, including the attainment of the most able students and those with special educational needs, so students in Year 11 attained standards significantly above those of students nationally in English and mathematics. The attainment of students in 2012 in English and in mathematics was slightly above standards nationally.
- Most students make good progress from their starting points. The progress of students in Year 11 in English in 2012 was slower than the rates of progress of students nationally. In 2013, progress accelerated in English so it matched that of students nationally. Lesson observations and scrutiny of work confirm that the improvement is being sustained for students currently in the school.
- However, although the attainment and progress of students in Year 11 supported by pupil premium funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, improved in 2013, students supported by this funding still attain at a lower level than the main group of students in the school and progress more slowly. In 2012, this group of students in Year 11 attained around one and a-half GCSE grades lower than the grades attained by the main group of students in the school in English and mathematics. In 2013, this difference in attainment was reduced to one grade in English and mathematics because they were supported by additional teaching.
- The achievement of disabled students and those with special educational needs, from their individual starting points, improved in 2013 and they made faster progress than similar students nationally from their starting points because tasks in lessons, particularly in mathematics, are pitched at the appropriate level.
- Most students in Key Stage 3 make rapid progress from their starting points, because they are given additional help if they fall behind.
- The small proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as most other students. This demonstrates the school's effective commitment to providing equality of opportunity.
- The school is using Year 7 catch-up funding to provide well-targeted, specialist literacy lessons for individuals who are behind in their reading. Their progress in improving their reading is regularly checked. Additional help is given to improve students' numeracy skills.
- The achievement of students in the sixth form is outstanding. They achieve well above average standards because of strong teaching. They make exceptional progress, as a result of the high level of challenge in lessons and close mentoring of their learning. A proportion of students attend a partner school's sixth form for one or more subjects, and vice versa. Most students move on to higher education.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Most teaching seen in all key stages during the inspection was good, with a small minority that was outstanding. The review of students' work over time also indicated progress for most students is good, demonstrating the good impact of teaching over time for these students.
- Teachers plan lessons so that most students are challenged to think hard and explain their views and understanding. Good suggestions are given by teachers which prompt students to develop new ideas and extend their knowledge. For example, in a Year 12 business studies lesson, the teacher introduced a range of different ways of surveying attitudes to products, which enabled students to design a marketable product very effectively.
- Teachers ask carefully planned questions so students can extend their answers and build their knowledge and understanding. In Year 7 mathematics lesson, students made exceptional

progress in exploring probability because the teacher encouraged them to understand and use the correct terminology, increasing the difficulty of questions so students were made to think hard about what the probability of combined events would be, and planned the tasks and activities well to build students' knowledge and understanding step by step.

- Work in students' books indicates a good level of challenge for most students. However, feedback from teachers about students' work does not consistently identify what they have done well or what or how they can improve. Suggestions for the next steps for improvement are often too general and teachers do not always make sure students read and respond to their suggestions.
- Too little teaching tailors tasks and activities to the needs of those students supported by the pupil premium funding so often they work more slowly and do not always get the help they need to build their confidence or strengthen their insecure understanding. Information from assessments or the marking of these students' written work are not used to plan the most effective activities to support rapid progress.
- Teaching in the sixth form has improved over time and strongly supports outstanding progress. Students are effectively challenged and are partners in their learning. Teachers email the assessed work back to students and students work on the suggestions made by the teacher about how to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of students is exemplary. This is equally so in lessons and around the school. Students treat each other and adults with respect, take turns and wait patiently for space to move in the narrow corridors. They keep the dining and leisure areas tidy and litter free with little prompting and treat resources in lessons and facilities around school with care.
- Students are cooperative in lessons and settle to work, following instructions willingly. They are keen to do their best and respond very well to teachers' interest and enthusiasm. Students are clear about their current levels of attainment and the levels they are to reach in the future.
- All students know the steps taken to manage behaviour in lessons and around the school. They take pride in, and responsibility for, their learning. Any behaviour that is likely to limit the learning of others is not tolerated by students or staff.
- Students throughout the school speak very positively of the additional help and support they receive with their work, but also if they are concerned or worried. They feel safe and secure in school and views of parents and staff concur with this view. Year 7 students spoke highly of the support given by staff and older students when they moved from their primary school.
- There is a high commitment demonstrated by all students to the welfare of others. A sizeable group of students worked with enthusiasm and commitment to prepare impressively presented Christmas hampers for disadvantaged families and individuals in the locality. Any use of derogatory or discriminatory language is extremely rare and they understand clearly the differences in lifestyles and the beliefs of others nationally, in the locality and the region.
- Students are fully aware of the range of ways in which individuals can be bullied or exploited and the different reasons behind it. There are rare cases of bullying in the school but all students are clear who they can go to for help and feel confident in doing so.
- Attendance is above average and very few students are persistently absent. Very few students are excluded from lessons or from school and there are several strategies and a number of key staff to help those students who struggle to meet the school's high expectations of good and better behaviour.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders, managers and governors have successfully improved the attainment and progress of most students since 2012, so they reach well above average standards by the time they leave

the school. The attainment and progress of students in the sixth form have consistently improved since 2009, and are now outstanding. The improvement in attainment and progress in 2013 of students supported by pupil premium funding improved less rapidly.

- Students supported by the use of pupil premium funding made better progress and attained higher standards in 2013 compared with 2012, as a result of the use of the funding to provide additional teaching and small group support.
- However, leaders, including subject leaders and managers, are not currently checking carefully enough whether those students supported by the pupil premium funding are given work that provides the right degree of difficulty and enables them to learn at the same good rates as other pupils.
- The headteacher and governors have used the national standards very effectively to establish a performance management system that sets teachers' targets to increase the proportion of students reaching the highest standards. The system now enables school leaders to agree rewards and recognition which are matched closely to effective teaching and students' progress.
- The proportion of staff who responded to the questionnaire expressed very positive views of students' behaviour and learning, and agreed that students are safe and cared for well.
- Parents express very positive views of the effectiveness of the school in supporting their child's learning and progress and the vast majority would recommend the school to other families.
- The school's curriculum prepares students very well for the future. It offers a wide range of subjects to study to different levels in Key Stages 4 and 5 and supports students very well in selecting those which will enable them to follow their chosen pathways after Key Stage 4 and beyond. The curriculum for sixth form students is effectively extended by sharing high quality courses with a partner school.
- Both the school's curriculum and events offered to students develop their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Art displays, assemblies around current events, such as the death of Nelson Mandela, drama and school council activities ensure that students are very well prepared for the future.
- The school is a strong partner in the Teaching Alliance and other networks. It supports other schools to improve successfully.
- The school did not enter students for examinations early in 2013. Leaders, managers and teachers used the teaching time up to the end of Key Stage 4 to make sure students' knowledge and understanding was as secure as possible before taking examinations that prepared and equipped them for future courses.
- Arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements and ensure that the sixth form students attending courses at each of the school's sites are safe.
- The local authority provides light touch support for the school and regularly supports leaders and managers in evaluating the trends in improvement based on the school's data, local authority measures and national data.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are extremely well informed and challenge school leaders effectively. They benefit from regular training so they know what the school's data is telling them about students' attainment and progress. As a result of the school's detailed accounting and evaluation of how the pupil premium funding is spent, governors are very clear about how much progress students supported by this funding have made. They know this group of students need to accelerate their progress further and are highly committed to seeing this happen. Governors share a range of business and education experience and have been very clear about how performance management systems can be used to recognise effective teaching. They know teaching has improved since 2012 and what still needs to happen for all students to make the best progress, particularly students having more effective feedback on their learning. The governing body is very well placed to continue to challenge and support the headteacher and school leaders.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 137775 |
| Local authority | Leeds |
| Inspection number | 425967 |

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

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|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Type of school | Academy Converter |
| School category | Non-maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 11–18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1,408 |
| Of which, number on roll in sixth form | 263 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Roland Meredith |
| Headteacher | Keith Bothamley |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Telephone number | 0113 226 5454 |
| Fax number | 0113 226 5401 |
| Email address | info@horsforth.leeds.sch.uk |

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