

Appleton Academy

Woodside Road, Wyke, Bradford BD12 8AL

Inspection dates

2–3 March 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This a school that requires improvement

- In 2014 and 2015 standards at the end of Year 11 were low and rates of progress were too slow. There is compelling evidence that current Year 11 pupils are making much stronger progress from low starting points.
- The quality of teaching in the secondary phase requires improvement, particularly in science and modern languages.
- Teaching and its impact over time remains inconsistent in the secondary phase. Assessment is not yet used effectively to ensure that teaching is appropriately challenging.
- A minority of pupils do not concentrate well in lessons in the secondary phase. Too many lose concentration in the latter part of lessons.
- Pupils' behaviour in science and modern languages is poor. The teachers fail to engage them in challenging and stimulating work.
- A small minority of pupils behave boisterously around the school in the secondary phase. Evidence suggests that this type of behaviour is becoming less common at the school.
- The correct footwear is not worn by many pupils in the secondary phase. Pupils were observed using mobile phones without permission and arriving at lessons without the correct equipment.
- In 2014 and 2015 standards at the end of Year 12 and Year 13 were below average in academic subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- The quality of education provided in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. It prepares children brilliantly for the next stage in their learning.
- Pupils also achieve outstandingly well in the primary phase, making excellent progress as a result of the consistently outstanding teaching they receive.
- Leaders, including governors and the school trust's leaders, have taken action that is improving the school. This is clearly evident in the primary phase and increasingly so in the secondary phase and sixth form.
- Attendance is improving at a significant rate.
- The school's work to develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is particularly strong.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching in the secondary phase is consistently good or outstanding, particularly in science and modern languages, by:
 - sharing the excellent practice that already exists, particularly in the primary phase and in English in the secondary phase, to improve the rigour with which teachers plan lessons, so that tasks are challenging to all
 - using assessment and feedback more effectively to ensure that all pupils understand the purpose of learning and, as a consequence, take greater pride in their achievement
 - developing the ability of pupils in the secondary phase to work hard in challenging lessons for lengthy periods of time.

- Raise achievement across the secondary phase of the school, particularly in science and modern languages, by:
 - rigorously checking that all pupils and groups of pupils are making at least expected rates of progress
 - ensuring that all teachers have appropriately high expectations of all pupils, including in their attitude to their work.

- Improve the behaviour of pupils in the secondary phase by:
 - robustly challenging unacceptable conduct in science and modern languages
 - establishing consistency in maintaining high standards of uniform, the use of mobile phones and the requirement for pupils to be properly equipped to learn in all lessons.

- Continue to improve the quality of provision in the sixth form, ensuring that academic achievement is at least in line with national averages.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The principal, senior leaders and members of the governing body are acting with purpose and determination to bring about necessary and important changes to the school. The impact of their work in Early Years and Foundation Stage and the primary phase is highly impressive and the leadership of both areas is outstanding. Though achievement in the secondary phase and in the sixth form requires improvement, it is improving rapidly as a result of the robust action of leaders to improve teaching and its impact over time.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. As a consequence they are able to astutely identify key areas for development and to ensure that those areas are addressed as a matter of priority. Communications with the staff body are highly effective and, as a result, very strong team work is now being established across all phases, and staff morale has risen, with the great majority expressing very positive views about the school's work and its future.
- Leadership of the primary phase is exceptionally strong. All children benefit from a high level of focus and personal attention and leaders ensure that every child is challenged and supported to make great progress in their learning.
- Leaders now have effective systems in place to help them check on the progress, attitudes and behaviour of all pupils at the school. The information is increasingly well used by leaders. In the primary phase, for example, leaders have acted decisively in the development of younger teachers and this has had a significant and positive effect on the quality of provision.
- The school's work on the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strength. During the inspection the school's engagement in World Book Day was inspirational. Pupils are excellently prepared for their future lives in modern Britain and this was reflected in a visit to a Hindu temple during the inspection, which pupils spoke about with passion and a new understanding.
- In the secondary phase new leadership in English, mathematics, science and the humanities is acting as a driving force to improving standards of achievement. This is particularly the case in English, which now acts as a centre for the development and dissemination of best practice. Pastoral leaders and those with responsibility for children with special educational needs are also having a positive impact on the speed of improvement at the school.
- Though there is evidence of leaders in the secondary phase prioritising the improvement of behaviour and attitudes for all students, insufficient focus has been placed on ensuring consistency in uniform standards, the use of mobile phones and the need for pupils to be properly equipped for lessons.
- Pupil premium funding is now being used more effectively to support the learning and progress of disadvantaged children. As a consequence, the gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their peers at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 are narrowing and this is set to continue in the coming years.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is used effectively so that the quality of physical education is at least good for all pupils. External sporting specialists lead activities for pupils each week and all pupils participate with enthusiasm in a wide range of physical activities. This contributes well to their improved skills and to their fitness and well-being.
- Leaders' monitoring of pupils attending alternative provision is good. They receive regular information on attendance and regular reports on progress and behaviour. They liaise frequently with staff at the alternative provisions, ensuring that pupils are kept safe and that safeguarding procedures are fully adhered to.
- In the primary phase the curriculum is highly effective, building key skills with thoroughness and engaging children in very innovative and creative experiences which are memorable and effective. In the secondary phase the curriculum is broad but does not yet fully ensure that pupils are successfully equipped to succeed in final examinations.
- Careers education and advice are taught extensively throughout the school, including in the primary phase. This contributes well to pupils' preparation for the next stages in their education and life.
- The school trust provides effective support and makes a strong contribution to the school's ongoing improvements. It checks closely all aspects of the work of the school and holds leaders to account.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding and child protection policies and practices meet current requirements and are effective and that staff know what to do should they have any concerns.

- Since the last inspection, leaders have worked closely with parents to help them support their children's learning. This is particularly strong in the primary phase, where, for example, workshops are used to help parents understand how to support the learning of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) and mathematics. In the secondary phase, meetings to review progress are now well attended by parents and are playing an important role in improving achievement.
- Parents and pupils are confident in leaders' ability to bring about further improvements in the secondary phase and sixth form at the school. The responses submitted on Parent View during this inspection were overwhelmingly positive regarding the quality of leadership.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The very effective governing body brings a range of expertise to its work, including in education and business. It works closely with the academy trust to check all aspects of the school's work and to hold leaders to account for improving pupils' achievement.
 - Governors have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress across the school. They make good use of external support, their own visits to the school and discussions with staff and pupils to help them evaluate the accuracy of school leaders' views of the quality of teaching and progress. They challenge and support the principal and other leaders effectively.
 - Robust appraisal systems are now in place and aspirational performance targets have been set for leaders and staff to improve the quality of teaching and achievement. Records of the work of governors show that they make it clear that teachers and leaders will only be considered for salary progression as a result of good performance. Underperformance is challenged robustly.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching is not yet consistently good enough in the secondary phase in science and modern languages to address the past legacy of underachievement and to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve well in those key subjects.
- In the primary phase of the school teaching is outstanding. Teachers plan tasks which are informed by expert assessment and, as a consequence, all children are challenged and supported to make outstanding progress. In a Year 4 numeracy lesson, for example, higher-ability children rose excellently to the challenge of adding and subtracting complex decimals. In this lesson and others learning was made fun and memorable through the use of creativity, role play and music, and children worked hard and with great enjoyment for lengthy periods of time. Children in the primary phase are also able to speak with confidence and accuracy about work completed much earlier in the year because teaching ensures that key concepts, skills and knowledge are memorised.
- The teaching of writing, reading and mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2 is exemplary. The accurate use of grammar, punctuation and spelling is established immediately and pupils revel in the opportunity to write for a variety of purposes and audiences. They are proud of their work, enthusiastic about their reading and are increasingly able to analyse the skills of writers in the development of their own work. There is a strong emphasis on the development of inference and comprehension skills and an extensive programme of home reading is actively supported by teaching assistants, who provide additional help for families experiencing difficulties in this key area. Leaders plan exciting and challenging opportunities for pupils to solve mathematical problems in real-life situations throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils respond with great enthusiasm and speak with confidence, as they move through both key stages, about mathematical concepts with accuracy and precision.
- In the secondary phase some teachers do not use assessment information sharply enough to ensure that they plan and set activities that support those needing additional help or are difficult enough to make the most able think deeply. This slows learning, and in a few instances in modern languages and science, leads to inattentiveness and silly behaviour.
- In the secondary phase, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. As a result, some pupils work too slowly and teachers accept work which is of a low standard.
- The quality of homework in the primary phase is of an exceptional standard and plays a significant part in accelerating the achievement of all pupils. In the secondary phase, the picture is inconsistent. Some homework makes little contribution to improving pupils' learning because it is too easy, but where teaching is more effective, pupils are given activities that extend their knowledge and deepen their understanding.

- The teaching of English, mathematics and humanities in the secondary phase is now very strong. This is reflected in the views of pupils and parents. Many pupils, for example, spoke with great enthusiasm to inspectors about the excellence of their lessons in English, which were stimulating, challenging and rewarding.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare in the primary phase is outstanding. Children are highly motivated and expertly supported by the school in their learning, both in and outside lessons.
- In the primary sector, leaders have put great emphasis on ensuring that pupils feel safe in the school and learn to protect themselves from any risks to their physical and emotional well-being. Pupils know what to do if they feel unsafe or unhappy and they and their parents have a very high regard for the immediate support that is available to them in such instances. All pupils in the primary phase who spoke to the inspection team made it clear that they very much enjoy coming to the school each day.
- In all phases of the school the approach to the development of pupils' personal, social and health education is comprehensive and highly valued. Pupils in primary and secondary education spoke at length about how the programme had helped and supported them in their journey through the school.
- The school places great emphasis on pupils taking greater responsibility in their learning and in the wider life of the school community. Pupils' enjoyment of World Book Day was inspiring and this included a range of activities organised and led by pupils themselves.
- In the secondary phase, a minority of pupils are not proud of their work and do not try hard in lessons. Consequently, those pupils are making less progress than their peers in developing effectively for the next stage of employment and learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- In the secondary phase of the school a minority of pupils misbehave in lessons and around the building at breaktimes. Poor behaviour in lessons is particularly evident in science and modern languages, where teaching lacks pace and challenge and teachers do not display a love of their subject.
- In the secondary phase of the school important rules are not enforced consistently. This includes pupils wearing the correct footwear, the use of mobile phones and the requirement to bring correct equipment to lessons.
- Attendance in the secondary phase was in line with national averages in 2014 and 2015. Current data show that for the year so far the level of attendance has improved significantly for all key groups.
- Levels of persistent absenteeism have fallen over the past two years. The school has worked hard in this area, linking with its whole community, including those parents who are more reluctant to engage with the school.
- Behaviour in the primary phase of the school is outstanding. Pupils are very positive about the school and are exceptionally keen to learn. This is reflected in their very high rates of attendance, which are well above the national average.
- The significant majority of pupils behave well around the school and in lessons. Those pupils are polite, respectful and welcoming.
- Parents and pupils are all of the view that bullying is rare and that when it does occur the school deals with it most effectively. Parents agree with pupils that they feel safe in the school at all times.

Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils in Key Stage 4 made insufficient progress in English, mathematics and science in 2014 and 2015. There is compelling evidence that achievement in mathematics and English has improved dramatically; this is not yet the case in science.
- Pupils enter the secondary phase of the school with below-average attainment in reading, writing, communication and mathematics. Evidence observed by inspectors of teaching, the learning and attitudes of pupils, tracking information provided by leaders and the work undertaken by pupils in their books

shows that the school's predictions for attainment, which are much higher than that achieved in 2014 and 2015, are accurate.

- In the primary phase, outcomes for pupils are outstanding. Building upon the excellence of the Early Years and Foundation Stage, pupils make rapid progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In the 2015 Year 1 national phonics screening check, an above-average proportion of pupils reached the expected standard. This represented at least good progress in relation to the pupils' starting points.
- In the Year 2 tests in 2015 the standards reached in reading, writing and mathematics were well above average. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' test results show that they make outstanding progress; they are well in excess of the national average for children who have entered the school with basic skill levels which are well below those typically found nationally.
- In the secondary phase of the school, higher-ability students now achieve very well in English, mathematics and humanities. This is not yet the case in science and modern languages because teachers' expectations of what they can achieve are not high enough. Consequently, teachers do not plan and set work that is demanding enough to help them attain the highest grades possible.
- In 2015 disadvantaged Year 11 pupils were a full grade behind their classmates and a grade and a half behind other pupils nationally in English and mathematics. Disadvantaged students also underachieved in science and modern languages. Evidence provided by the school and extensive discussions with pupils show that disadvantaged pupils are set to achieve well in 2016, narrowing the gap significantly between themselves and other pupils at the school.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make outstanding progress in the primary phase and good progress in Key Stages 3 and 4. In the primary phase they benefit from intensive support which is highly personalised. Older pupils, though well supported, struggle in key parts of the curriculum, including science.
- Additional teaching funded by the Year 7 and 8 catch-up premium is particularly effective in the development of reading. It is not yet effective in the development of mathematics.
- The school no longer enters students early for GCSE examinations. This is so that they have the opportunity to study for the full duration of Year 11 to attain their best possible grades.
- The pupils studying a range of qualifications in alternative provision achieve well. The courses are well suited to their needs and the school tightly monitors their progress.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- Early years leaders provide outstanding leadership. Accurate self-evaluation and highly impressive improvement planning ensure rapid progress. The curriculum is innovative, creative and challenging and children excel in their learning in indoor and outdoor areas which are stimulating and expertly planned. The range of learning opportunities is exciting and every child is proud of their own individual achievement.
- Children join the Early Years and Foundation Stage with skills that are well below those typical of their age in language and communication, mathematics and social skills. Ongoing assessments of children's achievements are exceptionally thorough. The information, shared with parents, ensures that every child is challenged and supported in their learning, both within the school and at home.
- Children's social and discussion skills are expertly developed. They are encouraged to discuss characters in books and to reflect upon the way in which a story creates excitement. Their communication and thinking skills are developed rapidly and this is supported through very well-planned cross-curricular activities and visits, which capture their imagination. During the inspection this was evident in the celebration of World Book Day, where a member of the governing body and a visiting writer skilfully led reading to children, who listened in awe. Teachers used these activities as a springboard for conversation, further reading, writing and mathematics, as well as for collaborative play. As a result, the proportion of children who are on track to leave the Reception Year with a good level of development is much higher than that found nationally.
- Children are very well cared for and prosper from working in a safe environment. Their behaviour is excellent and they share and work together in an impressive way. They also learn about other cultures which, during the inspection, included a visit to a Hindu temple. As a consequence they gain in self-confidence, learn to respect others and understand how to stay healthy. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because it is meticulously planned and sensitively delivered.

16 to 19 study programmes

require improvement

- Outcomes for academic programmes of study in 2014 and 2015 were below average in most subjects. In vocational subjects outcomes were broadly in line with the national average.
- The sixth form is increasingly popular and the quality of teaching, as observed during this inspection, has improved significantly. The predicted A-level results for 2016 represent outcomes which are at least good and those predictions are confirmed through extensive discussions with learners, analysis of their work and the observation of teaching.
- Achievement is not yet good because there are still variations in attainment and rates of progress between different subjects at A level. Where progress is weaker, the thoroughness and cohesion of the programme of study does not prepare learners effectively for success in examinations.
- Retention rates are improving and learners speak with great conviction about the excellence of the work of leaders, teachers and other professionals in supporting them in their studies, including at times of personal difficulty or challenge.
- Learners who enter the sixth form without having secured a C grade for GCSE English or mathematics are given excellent teaching. As a consequence, all learners secured those key qualifications before the end of Year 13 in 2015; success rates are well beyond the national average.
- Teaching in the sixth form is improving significantly. Outstanding teaching and its impact over time was noted in science and psychology; in the former students were highly motivated in their analysis of genes and generational trends within biology.
- Sixth-form learners display extremely positive attitudes to all aspects of life at the school and now attend very well. A high proportion of learners go on to university, and the quality of advice and guidance provided for them is rated highly by the whole student population.
- Learners benefit from the very good opportunities for personal development which are also evident throughout the rest of the school. They are well prepared for life beyond the school because they are successfully supported to speak with confidence and to be curious about the coming challenges of adult life. All sixth formers benefit from a detailed and highly effective programme of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. A comprehensive range of work experience opportunities enhance the enrichment programme.
- Learners are confident of their safety within the school environment. They are also mature and sensible in their use of technology.
- The sixth form is well led and managed. The school has raised the profile of academic success in the sixth form and, although the sixth form is small, learners are able to study their preferred combination of options.

School details

Unique reference number	135865
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	10002174

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	All-through
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,309
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Acting – Leon Riley
Principal	Helen Jones
Telephone number	01274 600550
Website	www.appletonacademy.co.uk
Email address	info@appletonacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 December 2013

Information about this school

- Appleton Academy is an average-sized all-through school. Its sixth form is much smaller than average.
- The school is sponsored by the Bradford College Educational Trust.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority) is well above the national average.
- The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language, are in line with those seen nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or with an education, health and care plan is in line with that found nationally.
- A small number of pupils attend off-site alternative provision at Bradford College.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed an extensive range of teaching across all key stages. Three were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- A range of meetings were held with pupils, representatives of the governing body, school staff and leaders from the trust.
- Inspectors analysed pupils' work across a range of subjects and in all key stages, listened to pupils read and attended an assembly. An inspector also attended a staff training session.
- Inspectors took account of the 49 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documents, including improvement plans, data on pupils' current progress, records of governing body meetings, records of external visits and important information relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

John Townsley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Bowyer	Ofsted Inspector
Beverly Clubley	Ofsted Inspector
Graham Crerar	Ofsted Inspector
Catherine Morgan	Ofsted Inspector

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