

# The Skipton Academy

Gargrave Road, Skipton, North Yorkshire BD23 1UQ

## Inspection dates

13–14 June 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Over time, senior leaders have not provided strong leadership. Plans and strategies for improvement have been poorly implemented and procedures to review the school's work are ineffective.
- Leaders have not ensured that assessment systems are fit for purpose. They have not been rigorous in checking the progress made by different groups of pupils. Pupils' progress is highly variable and many make slow progress, especially in mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make enough progress from their starting points, particularly in English and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is inadequate. Work is not planned well enough to challenge or excite pupils. Nor does it take account of their prior attainment or learning needs.
- Behaviour is inadequate. A significant number of pupils show little enthusiasm for learning. Attendance is declining and rates of persistent absence are high.
- Leaders have failed to hold middle leaders to account for the progress of pupils and the implementation of school policies.
- Governors do not challenge leaders robustly enough and have accepted delays in the information shared by leaders too readily. They do not check what difference the additional funding the school receives makes to the progress of disadvantaged pupils, those who need to catch up in Year 7 and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The trust recognises the challenges faced by the school but has not taken sufficient action to secure improvements and hold leaders to account.

### The school has the following strengths

- Arrangements to keep pupils safe at school are effective.
- At times, pupils learn and behave well, especially in the top sets when interesting work is provided.
- The interim leadership team is taking effective action to halt the school's decline by establishing plans and procedures to guide staff and support pupils.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

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

- Urgently improve leadership, management and governance so that they are effective in ensuring pupils reach higher standards and make faster progress to be the best they can, by:
  - making sure that staff at all levels are accountable for the quality of their work and the difference this makes to pupils' learning, development and achievement
  - making sure that leaders at all levels are responsible for school improvement, know their roles well and are confident and able to promote improvements for pupils
  - putting in place a rigorous and coherent approach to improving the quality of teaching and ensuring a rapid response to the issues identified
  - establishing effective and accurate assessment, target-setting and tracking systems
  - securing pupils' good attendance and putting effective strategies in place to reduce persistent absence
  - devising and implementing a sharply focused improvement plan, setting clear timescales and checking closely the impact of the actions taken
  - making sure that additional funding provided for disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who need to catch up is consistently effective in helping them to make rapid progress
  - quickly developing secure and effective governance so that governors play a full and effective part in bringing about improvement.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all areas of the school, by:
  - making sure that teachers have the highest expectations, including of how pupils present and complete their work
  - ensuring that teachers take full account of the current knowledge, skills and understanding of pupils when planning lessons so that all groups are challenged and stretched to do their very best at all times
  - insisting that teachers provide work that inspires and engages all groups of pupils so that they are interested and behave well
  - using assessment information effectively to identify underachievement and taking swift and effective action to tackle it.
- Urgently improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, especially for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities,

by ensuring that:

- there is a rapid reduction in pupils' absence so that opportunities for learning are not missed
- pupils treat each other and adults with respect at all times
- improvements in behaviour are secured quickly to eradicate low-level disruption in class and to reduce exclusions
- pupils have further opportunities to learn about risks and how to keep themselves healthy and safe.

An external review of governance is recommended in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium is recommended in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- Over time, leaders at all levels have not adequately monitored, reviewed or evaluated plans and improvement strategies. They have not tackled the most pressing weaknesses to ensure effective and accurate assessment, good teaching and outcomes. Low expectations across the school contribute to pupils' underachievement.
- Leaders have failed to set realistic targets and implement effective mechanisms to assess and track the performance of pupils at key stage 3, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities throughout the school.
- Leaders have checked the quality of teaching. However, they have not used the information they gain from this to help them identify what is and is not working and plan improvements. Staff have had little professional development or guidance about how to improve their practice to secure better progress for pupils. As a result, much teaching is weak, uninspired and does not challenge pupils.
- Senior and middle leaders are not always clear about their roles and what is expected of them. There is too little accountability at all levels throughout the school. Governors have not challenged senior leaders, who in turn have not held middle leaders to account for the variability in their departments or subjects.
- The curriculum has not been wholly effective in meeting the needs of all pupils. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have not always had opportunities to study languages or to receive additional support to help them learn quickly in English and mathematics. Interim leaders swiftly changed the practice of frequent changes to examination courses and options, with pupils dropping some, and starting others mid-year. However, the changes have yet to fully take effect.
- The promotion of British values and provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural education is poorly planned and coordinated. Leaders are beginning to address this issue through regular assemblies.
- Improvements in the advice and guidance to pupils are now helping them to make informed choices about their courses and next steps. A range of extra-curricular activities including sports and trips are valued by pupils.
- The trust has kept detailed oversight and has secured improvement in school finances. However, it has not challenged leaders enough to accelerate the rate of school improvement.
- Weaknesses in leadership have led to pupils' poor behaviour. It is recommended that the school does not appoint newly qualified teachers while pupils' behaviour remains inadequate.
- The school is in a state of flux following the principal leaving the school and the imminent departures of other members of the leadership team. Interim leaders have brought a temporary measure of stability. The school is dependent on their external support. Much has yet to be done to secure the school's capacity for improvement. Pupils welcome the greater stability provided.

## Governance of the school

- The governing body has failed to hold leaders stringently to account for the performance of the school.
- Over time, governors have not challenged senior leaders enough to speed up the rate of school improvement. Improvement plans lack the precision needed for governors to hold leaders closely to account.
- Governors have made sure that safeguarding responsibilities are met. However, they have not checked closely enough on other important aspects of the school's work. They have not ensured that decisions about the use of external funding are making a difference to close the gaps in achievement for disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who need to catch up.
- Governors do not have a clear picture of standards and progress in the school. They have not acted swiftly to establish facts and secure improvements when concerns were raised 12 months ago about the quality and accuracy of school performance information.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that safeguarding is a priority. Leaders and governors are trained in safer recruitment practices. Appropriate checks are made when staff are recruited and also on temporary staff and those who visit the school regularly. Staff training is up to date and they know how to spot concerns and how to refer pupils on to the school's safeguarding officer and to specialist support. Those responsible for safeguarding know their duties well. Much effort goes into ensuring that pupils missing school are followed up and staff know where pupils are. Almost all parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, feel their children are safe at the school.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Inadequate

- Teaching, learning and assessment is highly inconsistent and is not strong enough to ensure that all pupils catch up or make rapid gains in their learning, especially in English, mathematics and science. Teaching is rarely planned to challenge or enthuse pupils with a love of learning.
- Expectations are too low. Weak assessment practice means work is not adapted for pupils' needs. Lessons are seldom planned or structured to take account of pupils' prior knowledge and understanding. Pupils of all abilities are not set goals or tasks to stretch and challenge them.
- Many pupils make slow progress, and especially disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or abilities, who get a poorer experience than other groups. The lack of challenge is demonstrated in basic tasks, limited discussion or questioning and much talking at pupils. Teaching is rarely adapted to pupils' emerging

strengths or to plug gaps in their understanding. Consequently, during the inspection many pupils did not sustain their attention, and became bored and disruptive.

- Much of the emphasis in assessment is focused on pupils acquiring adequate grades in their GCSE examinations. Assessment, even for the youngest pupils, consists of predicting examination grades and there is regular practice of GCSE-style examination papers in mathematics. Subsequent checks on pupils' work found that their emerging confidence in calculation was quickly dashed for some Year 7 pupils.
- Classes in mathematics, French, geography and science are more likely to be taught by non-specialists, teaching assistants, or are shared across two teachers who each teach pupils separate topics. Pupils in all year groups who have such arrangements find them confusing and a hindrance to their learning.
- In key stage 3 classes, work in many pupils' books is incomplete, untidy and shows little care. Many boys struggle with written work, have not mastered basic skills in reading or writing, or are unable to communicate legibly. Few, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive any support to help them improve.
- Advice and feedback to pupils about their work is infrequent and variable in its helpfulness. It is often so late that the topic is completed.
- Expectations of the most able pupils are generally higher, although this varies across and within different year groups and subjects. Questioning makes stronger demands of pupils to explain and give reasons for their responses, for example in business studies and English. Some older pupils feel resilient and well prepared for their examinations.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Inadequate

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Too few opportunities exist for pupils to learn positively about health, safety and emotional and mental health. Smoking on the school site occurs regularly.
- A small group of pupils do not respect each other or staff. Considerable efforts and resources are spent in dealing with the cheeky or insolent behaviour and swearing of a minority of pupils. More generally, pupils are neither committed to nor engaged in their learning. Pupils say they attend so that they meet their friends. Pupils have ambitions but their confidence and understanding about how to be successful in learning is limited.
- Pupils report that they do not feel unsafe but cite some bullying. Bullying takes place and is dealt with when reported but pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are picked on and called names. Some pupils have little confidence in pastoral teams to support them and address the issues. Pupils prefer to deal with senior leaders who do sort things out.
- Around school, pupils are relaxed and staff are working successfully to reduce the pressure and stress of examinations for Year 11 pupils.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Pupils' attendance is below average and is among the lowest in the country for some groups of pupils. Attendance has declined over the last two years. It has fallen further throughout this year. There is little urgency to improve it and the number of pupils who are persistently absent is very high. This was reflected in pupils' overall attendance during the two days of inspection, which was also low.
- Around school, behaviour is mostly calm and purposeful and in marked contrast to behaviour in lessons. In some classes, particularly in the bottom sets and across year groups, attitudes to learning and behaviour are poor. Pupils' lack of engagement and interest is tangible and it is demonstrated in little effort, untidy and careless work, a slow pace to learning and occasional disorderly classrooms.
- A lot of the negative behaviour is related to poor teaching, dull lessons and activities to occupy pupils rather than encouraging them to learn and make progress. Pupils, many of whom are disadvantaged, less able, or have special educational needs and/or disabilities, feel they are treated differently to the most able pupils in the top sets. These pupils told inspectors, 'We don't matter.' Teaching and pastoral staff have done little to tackle the underlying issues of equality.
- Staff have not always felt supported in the past in tackling behaviour incidents. Changes to school practices, introduced by the interim leadership team, now make clear the repercussions for poor behaviour, swearing and serious incidents. These recent measures have yet to take full effect and in the meantime incidents, especially in Year 7 and Year 10, continue to rise. More robust sanctions are taking place in line with the higher expectations the school now has of pupils. The use of isolation and exclusions is increasing.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Inadequate

- Pupils do not achieve as well as they need to by the time they leave school. This is especially the case for pupils who enter the school having already achieved basic standards in English and mathematics at the end of primary school, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils leaving the school at the end of Year 11 made weak progress in 2015. Although progress improved slightly for most-able pupils in 2016, the vast majority of pupils who should have made strong progress from their starting points did not do so. Progress in English, mathematics and science was slow.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieved significantly less well than pupils nationally with the same starting points. In 2016, progress was much slower in English, mathematics, science and humanities. Most-able disadvantaged pupils achieved over one grade less in mathematics and half a grade less in English, and few had the chance to study the English Baccalaureate. The gaps for current pupils who are disadvantaged are widening and many are underachieving.
- Currently, some key stage 4 pupils are not studying the right courses to enable them to achieve well. Some pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or

disabilities and pupils who require additional support, are studying too many courses, or they find themselves on courses they did not choose to study and have little interest in. Weaknesses in teaching and poor attendance also hamper their progress and opportunities for success.

- Target-setting at key stage 3 is unrealistic and assessment is inconsistent. Leaders found it difficult to produce reliable information about the progress pupils had made during the year. Over half of parents who responded to the inspection survey felt that their children were not making good progress.
- An analysis of the work of the most able pupils found much variability in books but predominantly a lack of challenge in mathematics, science and computing. Conversely, a slight improvement was seen in English. Pupils expressed similar views in discussions with inspectors.
- Checks on the work of other groups of pupils showed very slow progress across a range of subjects, especially mathematics and science in key stages 3 and 4.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make inadequate progress during their time at the school. Their progress and learning is slowed because the work they are given does not take account of their particular needs. For example, checks of Year 7 and Year 8 pupils' books showed that their emerging confidence in learning mathematics was quickly undermined by GCSE exam question training that they struggled to complete.
- Year 7 and Year 8 pupils who receive additional support to catch up in reading, writing and mathematics are making modest improvement. For example, pupils are developing confidence to read and discuss books. They had a good understanding of the meaning of parts of the stories they were reading and quickly placed written extracts into context.
- Overall, the school has remained in the bottom 10% of schools nationally for two years. Leaders do not have convincing evidence that current pupils are making rapid progress. Consequently, pupils are not prepared well enough for the next stage of their education.



## School details

Unique reference number	141179
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10032014

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	374
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anthony Booth
Executive Headteacher	Dr Andrew Cummings
Telephone number	01756 792965
Website	<a href="http://www.theskiptonacademy.co.uk">www.theskiptonacademy.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@theskiptonacademy.co.uk">admin@theskiptonacademy.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school converted to an academy in September 2014. The school is part of the Craven Educational Trust.
- The school is smaller than an average-sized secondary school. Slightly more boys than girls are on roll.
- Most pupils are White British, although pupils from a range of ethnic backgrounds attend the school. Most pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through pupil premium funding is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion that have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is also below average.
- The principal left in February 2017. Since then, an interim head of school was appointed along with an interim executive headteacher from South Craven School.

They are providing day-to-day leadership. Their secondments end in August 2017. The trust has appointed a new principal and deputy principal who had not taken up their roles at the time of the inspection.

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school met the government's floor targets for progress in 2016.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of teaching and learning in lessons, including some jointly observed with senior leaders. They reviewed pupils' work in lessons to establish the quality of their work and progress.
- Inspectors also conducted additional checks on a sample of pupils' books and coursework to check the work of the most able pupils, those who are disadvantaged and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Inspectors took account of pupils' views expressed in the inspection survey and also held discussions with pupils in meetings, during lessons, and informally at breaktimes. They listened to a selection of pupils reading.
- Inspectors also met with teachers, middle leaders and senior staff. They met with the interim leadership team, including the executive headteacher. They met with members of the governing body, including the chair. The lead inspector met with the chief executive of Craven Educational Trust.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's development plan, its self-evaluation, reports to governors and to middle leaders and documents relating to the performance management of staff and to safeguarding and child protection. Inspectors also looked at the interim plans and evaluation produced by the interim leadership team and the external reports commissioned by the school and the trust over the last three years.
- Inspectors analysed information on the performance of the school in comparison with others nationally and the school's own records of pupils' progress.
- Inspectors took account of the 22 responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also considered the responses of the 31 members of staff who completed Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and the responses of the 47 pupils who completed Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire.

## Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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