

Inspection of Yewlands Academy

Creswick Lane, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S35 8NN

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has recently undergone significant changes to the leadership team. New leaders are beginning to address several issues which have affected the quality of education pupils receive. Leaders have a shared drive and ambition to improve outcomes for every pupil. However, leaders recognise that there is more to do to ensure that all pupils achieve their full potential.

Most pupils enjoy school. The behaviour of pupils has improved this academic year. The number of suspensions and removals from lessons has fallen considerably. However, a significant minority of pupils do not attend regularly enough. Incidents of bullying are decreasing. Pupils are confident that when they raise concerns, staff will take appropriate action. Despite this, learning is still interrupted by some low-level disruption.

The quality of education, although improving, requires further development to ensure it meets the needs of all pupils. There is more work to do to ensure pupils play a full and active role in their learning.

A small number of extra-curricular activities are offered which only a limited number of pupils attend. Leaders are in the early stages of introducing a wider range of enrichment opportunities. There is an active student council. Pupils value this opportunity to be involved in improving their school.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

New leaders have reviewed the curriculum and thought carefully about what knowledge and skills pupils need to develop. However, in some subjects, including physical education and history, planning is not as detailed as it might be. What pupils will learn and in what order is not clearly set out in all curriculum plans. Leaders know there is more work to do to ensure planning is consistent.

In some subjects, leaders and staff use assessment well. It allows staff to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. In other subjects, staff do not identify pupils' misconceptions well enough. This means that gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding remain.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) follow the same curriculum as their peers. Plans that identify pupils' learning needs are in place. However, staff do not use these precisely enough to inform their lesson planning. As a result, pupils with SEND do not consistently get the support they need.

Staff know the pupils who need extra help to improve their reading. However, staff do not know exactly what it is that pupils need to work on to read fluently. Staff require further training to be able to identify pupils' weaknesses and support them effectively.

Leaders have successfully introduced new systems and processes that have helped improve pupils' behaviour. Most staff said that leaders support them when applying the behaviour policy. Pupils who have been suspended from school speak positively about the support they received to improve their behaviour. However, low level disruption continues to impact some lessons. This is most common where staff do not follow the behaviour policy consistently. Leaders recognise that more needs to be done to ensure the behaviour policy is applied consistently.

Leaders have planned and introduced a new personal development curriculum that is age-appropriate. It includes a range of topics such as healthy relationships, staying safe online and money management. Pupils revisit important aspects of the curriculum to increase their understanding. However, this curriculum is not fully embedded. Leaders recognise that pupils' learning during form time is variable. Plans are in place to improve this through staff training. Differences are celebrated as part of the personal development curriculum. Despite this, a minority of pupils demonstrate disrespect and an intolerant attitude. When staff are made aware of this, appropriate action is taken.

Pupils receive independent careers advice to help them make choices about their future. Year 10 pupils take part in work experience placements. Visits to universities and colleges are organised for older pupils. The careers curriculum is less developed for younger year groups. Some pupils say that they would welcome more information about career opportunities.

School leaders and trustees are aware that the school needs to improve further. They have set clear priorities for improvement linked to the curriculum and behaviour management. Trustees challenge leaders appropriately to support school improvement.

Most staff speak positively about workload and wellbeing. However, some staff and parents feel that changes are not always communicated clearly. They do not believe that leaders always listen to their concerns. As a result, change has not always been well received.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and those responsible for safeguarding make sure that staff and pupils are aware of a range of safeguarding risks. These include child sexual exploitation, internet safety and radicalisation. There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff know 'it could happen here' and act quickly on their concerns.

Leaders keep detailed records of the actions they take to keep pupils safe. They involve parents and external agencies. This helps to ensure decisions are made in the best interests of pupils. Staff receive ongoing training that helps them to effectively identify the safeguarding risks pupils may face.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Curriculum planning and assessment are not as effective as they could be. Staff require appropriate training linked to both. In some subjects, planning does not clearly identify how topics build upon previous knowledge and skills. In these subjects, pupils learn less well as they cannot connect their learning over time. Where curriculum plans remain underdeveloped, assessment does not allow staff to accurately identify gaps in pupils' knowledge or plan to fill these gaps in future lessons. Leaders should ensure a coherently planned curriculum with closely matched assessment is in place. They should provide teachers with the relevant training to teach the new curriculum consistently and effectively.
- Plans to improve pupils' reading are in the early stages of development. Leaders have not precisely identified the reasons for pupils' lack of fluency. Plans to improve pupils' reading are not closely matched to individual needs. Leaders should ensure that plans are developed and implemented that provide targeted support for the weakest readers. Staff should be trained sufficiently so that they can support pupils better.
- Pupils' learning is still affected by some low-level disruption. This is more common where staff do not apply the behaviour policy in the same way. Leaders should ensure a consistent approach to behaviour management is deployed by all staff. Leaders should provide targeted support for pupils who continue to misbehave.
- The new personal development curriculum is not embedded across the school. The teaching of personal development is variable, notably in form time sessions. Pupils do not always demonstrate the values as outlined in the curriculum, for example, by demonstrating tolerance and respect. Leaders should ensure staff receive appropriate training linked to the personal development curriculum so that pupils are given every opportunity to develop personally. They should continue to monitor the effectiveness of this curriculum and make any necessary changes.
- New leaders are undertaking an extensive change project at the school. Leaders recognise there is work to do 'to win hearts and minds' across the school community. A small number of staff and parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire felt that the reasons for change had not always been well communicated. Leaders should review their communication strategy in relation to change to ensure it is effective in engaging all stakeholders.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	145943
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10227788
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	857
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Drayson
Executive Principal	Vicky Simcock
Website	www.yewlandsacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- An executive principal from the multi-academy trust is currently leading the school in the absence of a head of school.
- The school sends a small number of pupils to three alternative education providers. Two of those are registered providers and subject to inspection by Ofsted.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical educations, qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and took that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the executive principal, senior leaders and representatives of the trust. They spoke to teaching and support staff. One inspector met with early career teachers.
- Deep dives were carried out in English, science, history, modern foreign languages and physical education. Inspectors spoke with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at books and spoke to both pupils and staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer, chair of the trust and other trustees.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, including checks made on all adults who come on to the school site. Inspectors spoke with pupils and staff to ensure their understanding of safeguarding procedures. An inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to check on their work to keep pupils safe in school.
- An inspector spoke to a sample of staff from the alternative providers used by the school. Safeguarding, curriculum and attendance procedures were reviewed.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation. This included minutes from the trust board meetings, curriculum plans and behaviour documents.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff surveys, including free-text responses.

Inspection team

John Linkins, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nicky Crum	Ofsted Inspector
Stuart Voyce	Her Majesty's Inspector
Debbie Redshaw	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Pridding	Ofsted Inspector

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