

Inspection of York High School

Cornlands Road, York, North Yorkshire, YO24 3WZ

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 September 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Resilience, aspiration and success are not just written values of the school, they are part of every day and every lesson. This is a school where pupils and staff are proud to say they work, study, play and grow together.

Expectations are clear. Pupils know the standards for behaviour and attitudes when they arrive at school in Year 7. Inspectors visited classroom where positive attitudes to learning were common. Staff and pupils enjoy the calm atmosphere in lessons. In the few instances where low-level disruption does occur, staff use the schools approach to positive behaviour effectively.

Staff know the pupils well. Pupils feel supported and safe. Bullying is uncommon, but when it occurs, staff deal with it effectively.

Pupils value the many opportunities for personal development that are available to them. The school offers an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, such as sport, cookery, languages, newspaper and current affairs club. These regular clubs as well as local and international visits help to broaden pupils outlook on life.

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

Leaders, staff and governors have put in place a curriculum that is ambitious. The same curriculum and opportunities are available to all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The curriculums in all subject areas have been re-designed and developed. The knowledge that pupils need to know has been carefully identified by staff. For example, in English the chosen texts from Year 7 to Year 11 develop pupils understanding of characters in the different books that have similar traits, such as diversity, identity and justice.

Teachers are passionate and know their subjects well. Leaders have prioritised staff development to ensure that the delivery of the curriculum is of the highest standard. The impact of staff training was clear to see in lessons. The focus on developing strong study habits and drawing out high-quality answers to questions they posed was evident. This staff training links to priorities leaders had set at whole school and department level.

Pupils bring life and subject experiences to lessons. In most areas teachers use pupils' prior knowledge well. However, at times teachers do not use this knowledge to inform activities and lesson content.

Leaders offer a broad range of subjects for pupils to study in key stage 4. A determined effort to promote pupils' interest in different subjects is in place. There has been a sharp increase in the number of pupils studying a language in Year 10. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to visit France on a funded trip and explore the language in greater depth.

If you are a pupil at York high school then you are a reader. Leaders and staff give reading a high profile in school. Pupils read daily. Teachers use fiction and non-fiction texts in lessons. There is a coordinated approach to identifying weaker readers. Phonics support is provided to those who need it. This ensures that all pupils can take pleasure in reading the diverse works of different authors in the school library.

Teaching staff receive clear information to support pupils with SEND. Pupils and staff help to provide this information. Leaders insist that staff get to know their pupils. This is helping to ensure that the staff meet the needs of pupils. When pupils have extra support they respond positively. Teaching assistants have formed strong working relationships with the pupils they support.

The school offer goes far beyond academic subjects. The large selection of after-school clubs and activities are well attended. Pupils enjoy them. There are an impressive number of trips that deepen subject learning. The curriculum for personal development at the school is thoughtfully designed. It gives pupils a breadth of knowledge in areas, such as health, safety, tolerance and respect. Staff encourage pupils to consider different views and beliefs and debate current issues.

Most pupils behave well. Leaders are working with pupils who fail to meet expectations. The pastoral team help pupils to understand the reasons why they find self-regulation hard. This support is continually developing. Trained staff support pupils with specific needs. This involves helping them to transition back into class after time out of class. Incidents that lead to exclusion, suspension and time out of class are falling. Reducing absence has been a focus for leaders. They have put a lot of effort into raising the attendance of those pupils who are absent frequently. As a result, some individual pupils' attendance has improved. Leaders recognise that there is still work to do reduce the level of absence.

Governors are astute. They know the school very well. They offer challenge and robust debate in meetings that involve senior leaders. Staff appreciate leaders' support in relation to well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding systems are robust. Leaders know their pupils well. Staff understand the potential risks that may arise for pupils. Staff know how to identify and report their concerns. They check their pupils' attendance, punctuality, and behaviour carefully.

Leaders meet regularly and share information quickly through school communication systems. This allows them to highlight issues that are causing concern in the local community. Leaders work closely with different agencies. They then draw together information that informs curriculum content.

The school has a coordinated and well-planned approach to teaching pupils how to recognise risk and stay safe. Pupils believe that adults will address issues and take their concerns seriously.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have developed a strategic approach to gathering, recording and analysing attendance information. This has allowed individual support for some pupils, this is beginning to have an impact. However, attendance remains low, and persistent absence continues to be high. This has a negative effect on the learning of pupils who are frequently absent. Leaders must continue to build on their efforts to improve attendance in a sustainable way.
- The curriculum is deliberately planned and sequenced to ensure that pupils' knowledge grows over time. In some instances, opportunities to develop and build on prior knowledge is not fully exploited by teachers. This has the potential to slow progress for some pupils. Leaders must ensure that teachers effectively use their understanding of pupils' prior knowledge to make informed choices for lesson content.

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.

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	144652
Local authority	York
Inspection number	10241400
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	724
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ian Wiggins
Headteacher	Rod Sims
Website	www.yorkhighschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the South Bank Multi Academy Trust.
- The school is smaller than an average-size secondary school.
- The school makes use of four alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 11 with information about approved technical educational qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and senior leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust, trustees and governors.

- Inspectors conducted deep dives into English, mathematics, geography and history. In each subject, inspectors visited lessons, scrutinised pupils' work and held discussions with subject leaders, teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss the arrangements in place to safeguard all members of the school community. Inspectors scrutinised checks leaders make on the suitability of staff, and other safeguarding records.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation, including policies, plans and record-keeping for safeguarding, behaviour management, attendance, careers education, advice and guidance, and relationships, sex and health education.
- The inspection team spoke to staff about behaviour and their workload in the school. The responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils, staff and parents were also considered.
- Inspectors met teachers who are at an early point in their teaching careers.

Inspection team

Richard Jones, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Gillian Hemming	Ofsted Inspector
Jessica McKay	His Majesty's Inspector
Kate Lounds	Ofsted Inspector

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