

Inspection of Ermysted's Grammar School

Gargrave Road, Skipton, North Yorkshire BD23 1PL

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 September 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Ermysted's Grammar School is a busy, happy school. There are many aspects of outstanding professional practice worthy of sharing with others. Exceptional leaders continually strive to develop and further evolve the school for the benefit of pupils. They have made significant changes to the school over recent years, ensuring that Ermysted's is not only a place for pupils to gain strong examination results, but also to experience exceptional personal development. Inspectors found an outward-facing school that prepares pupils well for life in diverse, modern Britain.

The behaviour of pupils is exceptional. During lessons, pupils are focused and keen to learn. Around the school, pupils are unfailingly courteous and purposeful. They are reflective young people, able to share their ideas about the importance of respect for all. Pupils report that, on the rare occasions that bullying occurs, leaders take rapid and effective action. Boys of all ages share their pride at being part of the school community.

Leaders continue to develop the strong academic curriculum that has long been at the heart of the school. At the same time, the headteacher ensures that the curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is prioritised. Pupils speak with understanding and empathy about important issues, including equality, radicalisation and online behaviours.

Members of the sixth-form are superb ambassadors for the school. Their maturity and good humour, as well as their work ethic, are impressive. Around the school, they are role models for the younger pupils. Sixth-form students support younger pupils with academic and emotional mentoring.

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

Leaders ensure the breadth and ambition for pupils by evolving the choices and structure of the curriculum. Pupils study English, mathematics, all three sciences, a choice of languages and one of the humanities to GCSE. Arts and technology subjects are highly valued and pupils enjoy the opportunity to follow computer science and physical education (PE) to GCSE and beyond. Outcomes are very positive for pupils across all subject areas.

Leaders have not been complacent about the teaching of reading. The library is the hub of the school. Leaders keep pace with the changing reading habits of pupils. They ensure a high-quality book stock includes diverse modern literature as well as classic reads. Pupils are keen to gain the school's own Ermysted Awards, with their emphasis on reading books and articles linked to curriculum subjects.

The high-quality, specialist knowledge of staff brings lessons to life. Teachers give expert explanations and pupils respond with enthusiasm. At times, in the lower school, teachers move learning on too quickly. Teachers do not check that essential

new knowledge is secure for all pupils before moving on. This means that sometimes pupils falter or repeat errors.

The sixth form is a very special place. Leaders ensure that students have access to a wide range of subjects. They have a valuable partnership with another local school to expand subject choices. A professional atmosphere is present in sixth-form lessons, with high-quality debate and discussion. Teachers draw on their expert knowledge to inspire the students. As a result, academic outcomes are strong and students progress to high-quality destinations. Leaders have developed a bespoke personal development programme that builds readiness for next steps in education and beyond.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) discuss the support they receive with maturity. They feel well supported and participate fully in the life of the school. Leaders have further expanded provision and expertise around SEND and are supporting the new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo).

Pupils are polite, friendly and enjoy their learning. During social times, pupils are keen to play games or spend time with friends in the dining room. Pupils enjoy the library space and the opportunity to talk to staff. Leaders have ensured effective transition for pupils joining Year 7, with older pupils playing an important role in supporting new pupils. Students in the sixth form behave with maturity and display a strong sense of responsibility towards younger pupils.

Leaders have developed an approach to personal development that pervades all aspects of the life of the school. Opportunities for pupil leadership are particularly well developed, including via the pupil newspaper. Leaders are clear in their ambition for pupils to be well-rounded, responsible and fully aware of the opportunities and challenges of life. They have put systems and resources in place to ensure that this happens.

Leaders ensure that extra-curricular clubs are available throughout the day. This enables pupils who travel longer distances to school to be involved. Sports of all types are played by many pupils, as well as a wide array of musical instruments.

Leaders and governors are determined to develop the school even further. There is no complacency. Reflective self-evaluation has led to significant changes in recent years. Leaders tackle the barriers faced by some pupils when applying to and joining the school. For example, leaders take steps to ensure that more pupils from diverse backgrounds can access the entrance examination. The staff, who are very proud to work at the school, appreciate the practical steps that leaders have taken to address their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have continuously evolved safeguarding systems to ensure the safety of pupils. Procedures for the safe recruitment of staff are rigorous. Policies and procedures are secure, with strong oversight from the well-trained governing board. Leaders ensure that staff have high-quality, regular training to enable them to identify when pupils may be at risk. Professional curiosity is encouraged. Leaders work closely with a range of outside agencies to support vulnerable pupils.

Leaders and staff have a comprehensive awareness of the pressures and risks pupils face, both when online and in the local communities. They have developed sources of support for pupils, including advice around positive mental health, safe spaces for discussion, and counselling. The well-developed curriculum supports pupils' understanding of staying safe in a wide range of circumstances, including conducting healthy relationships, the law around consent and the central importance of respecting others.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some key stage 3 lessons, staff do not always check that pupils have secured the essential subject knowledge before moving on to teach new content. This means that some pupils do not have the knowledge they need to support new learning. Leaders should ensure that all staff understand the importance of checking that component knowledge is secure. Leaders should assure themselves that these checks are consistently in place.

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	121716
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10242404
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	840
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Christopher Worts
Headteacher	Michael Evans
Website	www.ermysteds.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 October 2008, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Ermysted's Grammar School is a selective, maintained school for boys.
- The current headteacher took up post in September 2016.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision for pupils.
- 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 education 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 had 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 a range of school senior leaders, including the leads for careers and the sixth form. They met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors spoke to teaching and non-teaching staff.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, history, PE and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed curriculum plans with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans from a range of other subjects and spoke to pupils about their wider learning. An inspector scrutinised the planning of the school's enrichment curriculum and the planning for PSHE. An inspector spoke with leaders responsible for the development of reading across the school.
- Inspectors met with the SENCo and looked at a range of documentation regarding pupils' needs. Inspectors spoke to pupils with SEND about how the school meets their needs and looked at their provision in lessons.
- Inspectors met with the leaders responsible for safeguarding. They checked logs of the actions the school has taken to keep pupils safe. They scrutinised bullying logs and other behaviour records. Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and checked safer recruitment practices.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at social times, at the beginning and end of the school day, in registration and during extra-curricular activities. They spoke with groups of pupils from all key stages about bullying, behaviour at different times of the day, attitudes and the school's work around their personal development.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, analysis of additional spending and summaries of pupil destinations. Inspectors reviewed records of the uptake of, and response to, the extra-curricular offer.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys. They also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included comments provided via the free-text facility.

Inspection team

Gabrielle Reddington, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Pauline Rowland	Ofsted Inspector
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