

Inspection of an outstanding school: Ilkley Grammar School

Cowpasture Road, Ilkley, West Yorkshire LS29 8TR

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 January 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Ilkley Grammar School have high levels of respect for each other and their teachers. Relationships between teachers and pupils are warm and caring. Pupils know that there are adults they can speak to if they are worried about anything. Leaders ensure that the school is inclusive. Pupils across the main school, the sixth form and the additionally resourced provision form one community. This helps pupils to feel safe. Bullying is incredibly rare.

All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), access an ambitious curriculum. Pupils can access a wide range of 'iLeader' opportunities, including, for example, Olicana Scholars, Eco-iLeaders and anti-bullying iLeaders. This helps pupils to develop independence and broadens their understanding of the rich curriculum. For pupils with the most complex needs, leaders ensure they are exposed to everyday experiences, such as travelling by public transport, to prepare them for life after Ilkley Grammar School. Pupils understand and celebrate diversity, but, for some pupils, their knowledge of different faiths and religions is not well developed.

Behaviour in lessons is calm and purposeful. Pupils engage with the activities that teachers plan. The use of technology in lessons, such as computer tablets, helps pupils to access information related to learning in lessons and to revisit and remember learned content. Leaders have ensured that pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online.

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

Leaders at all levels plan an ambitious curriculum. In English, for example, leaders plan concepts which are revisited across the curriculum in different year groups. This helps pupils to deepen their understanding. Across subjects, leaders plan for the powerful

knowledge that they want pupils to remember. This makes it clear to teachers what the end points for pupils are.

In lessons, teachers make checks on what pupils have remembered to ensure that key knowledge is retained. In the strongest subjects, pupils can recall prior learning and make links between what they are learning now and what they have previously learned. In some subjects, pupils' recall of prior learning is not as strong. This is particularly true of pupils' knowledge of different faiths and religions.

Teachers know pupils well because they receive clear information, for example about pupils with SEND and their particular needs. This precise information ensures teachers can support all pupils in working towards the same curriculum goals. To ensure that all pupils can access the curriculum, leaders train staff to work with pupils at the earliest stages of reading. Pupils in the additionally resourced provision are well supported in lessons. Teachers ensure these pupils are involved in lesson activities with their peers. They use the clear information that they receive about pupils' needs to adapt their teaching.

Pupils are focused in most lessons, and inspectors found that low-level disruption is rare. The strong relationships between teachers and pupils help to ensure that pupils trust teachers. This creates a positive atmosphere throughout the school.

Leaders' plans for pupils' wider development are thorough. The 'iLeader' programme develops from Year 7 to Year 13 so that pupils can take on more responsibility as they move through the school. In the sixth form, students can take on community work. They also work with subject teachers to support younger pupils in lessons. Pupils' mental health and well-being are prioritised by leaders, and over one third of the staff are trained in mental health first aid. This helps pupils to feel confident that there is an adult they can talk to.

Leaders encourage pupils to achieve their 'personal best' and to 'grow in wisdom and stature'. This links to the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum and pupils' wider personal development and is woven through subject curriculums. Work to fully embed this approach is ongoing. The PSHE curriculum is being further developed. Leaders have outlined the powerful knowledge that they want pupils to learn and remember.

Staff speak incredibly positively about the work of leaders. They feel a strong sense of community and can access support when they need it. They say that leaders have a realistic view of the impact of the new initiatives. Leaders take workload into account in any school improvement strategies. Lines of communication between the local governing body and trustees mean that there are robust systems in place to hold school leaders to account.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive clear and timely training. This means they can identify and pass on concerns quickly. The designated safeguarding leads ensure that they put support in place quickly, including from external agencies, to help pupils at risk. Adults in the school have a good understanding of local safeguarding risks.

Leaders carry out checks on the suitability of staff working with pupils, including at any alternative provision. However, while pupils are not placed at immediate risk of harm, the organisation of safeguarding records for the small number of vulnerable pupils accessing alternative provision needs improving so that relevant staff can access this information in a timely manner.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils' knowledge of different faiths and religions is weak. They struggle to recall information about different religious beliefs and communities. This means that some pupils are less well prepared for some aspects of life in modern Britain. Leaders should ensure that they seek to help pupils learn and remember precise knowledge of religions and beliefs.
- Some aspects of record-keeping in relation to alternative provision are not as strong as they need to be. While pupils are not at immediate risk of harm, this could mean that leaders are not able to track and monitor those pupils at alternative provision as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that record-keeping systems around the use of alternative provision are improved and are understood by all staff who oversee the safeguarding of pupils.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in March 2017.

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

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| Unique reference number | 136905 |
| Local authority | Bradford |
| Inspection number | 10257103 |
| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 2,085 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 514 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Alan Halsall |
| Headteacher | Carly Purnell |
| Website | http://www.ilkeleygrammarschool.com |
| Dates of previous inspection | 29 and 30 March 2017 |

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, Ilkley Grammar School has become part of the Moorlands Learning Trust as the founding school of the trust. Prior to this, the school was a stand-alone academy. The headteacher at the time of the last inspection has become the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust.
- The deputy headteacher at the time of the last inspection is now the headteacher. There have been other appointments to senior leadership since the last inspection. Most recently, two new assistant headteachers have been appointed.
- Ilkley Grammar School has an additionally resourced provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. It has places for 12 pupils. Currently, 15 pupils attend this provision. School leaders have secured funding from the local authority to expand the provision to 24 places.
- The school makes use of three alternative providers of education. Two of these are unregistered.

- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- 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 CEO, the headteacher, other senior leaders and some subject leaders.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the local governing body, including the vice-chair, and the board of trustees, including the vice chair.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science and business studies. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and other leaders for safeguarding to discuss the arrangements for safeguarding. The lead inspector also scrutinised records related to safeguarding, including the single central record and records about bullying. Inspectors also spoke to pupils and teachers about safeguarding.
- Inspectors met with a range of other leaders in the school to discuss PSHE and pupils' wider development.
- Inspectors met with leaders for the sixth form and spoke to some sixth-form pupils.
- Inspectors met pupils both formally and informally, including single-sex groups of pupils.
- Inspectors spoke to staff about the ways in which school leaders took workload and well-being into account. Through Ofsted's surveys, the views of staff, pupils and parents were considered.

Inspection team

Matthew Vellensworth, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stuart Voyce

His Majesty's Inspector

Mark Hassack

Ofsted Inspector

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