

# Inspection of a good school: The Elland Academy

Gelderd Road, 118, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS12 6DQ

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Inspection dates:

3 and 4 July 2023

## Outcome

The Elland Academy continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders are ambitious for pupils at The Elland Academy. They want pupils to return to mainstream schools or move to positive post-16 destinations. Most pupils join the school because they are at risk of repeated suspensions from their home school. Some pupils have been permanently excluded from other schools. Staff support pupils effectively to get back on track with their education. They guide pupils sensitively by 'shining a spotlight' on the reasons why they are placed in the school. This promotes reflection about their actions.

Leaders have created a purposeful school environment. The school supports pupils from key stage 2 to key stage 4. Each key stage benefits from a separate part of the school building. The primary provision is small and self-contained. It has ample resources to meet younger pupils' needs well. The secondary provision is much larger. It occupies two floors, with each area having several well-equipped classrooms. There is a dedicated space for art and a well-stocked library.

Most pupils feel happy at the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are very secure. Pupils feel they have someone they can speak to if they need support. The majority of pupils show improvements in their behaviour and attendance after they settle at the school. Pupils say there is no bullying in school, but if there were, staff would quickly sort it out.

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

Pupils follow a core academic curriculum that focuses on English, mathematics and science. It is well mapped out so that pupils are able to build on prior learning. It closely follows the mainstream curriculum developed by the trust. This ensures continuity when pupils return to mainstream education. Older pupils also study a range of vocational options. Some vocational subjects are offered by specialist providers away from school.

Lessons follow the intended curriculum well. They include adaptations for pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities. Opportunities to revisit learning and topic discussion are important parts of each lesson. Teachers reinforce lesson content and prepare pupils for learning effectively. Leaders have high expectations. All pupils are expected to take national tests appropriate to their age. Leaders prioritise reading. Most pupils use an online programme to improve their reading. It is generally well understood by pupils. They get instant feedback on how well they are doing and where they can improve. Pupils interact with this approach positively. Key staff are trained to deliver phonics. This ensures that pupils continue to develop their phonic knowledge during placements at the school.

Pupils generally behave well. They feel that the small class sizes support their learning, and they speak highly of the support they receive. Occasionally, some pupils use negative language. Adults mostly challenge this effectively. Pupils are largely settled in lessons. They typically refocus on the learning when they are reminded. Staff intervene effectively if pupils struggle to remain calm in school. Leaders use innovative approaches to track absence hotspots geographically. Staff contact families and home schools to chase up absences. This helps them to direct resources to support groups of pupils. The attendance of most pupils improves after joining the school. However, overall, school attendance is too low. Too many pupils miss valuable learning time.

Pupils experience a range of enrichment opportunities. These are earmarked in the timetable each week and through drop-down days. Activities to develop pupils' talents and interests include rock climbing, cooking and swimming. All pupils are expected to take part in these events. Pupils visit interesting places, including wildlife parks and artistic spaces. Pupils value these experiences. Leaders have identified the most important personal development topics to cover. During pupils' placement they learn about topics that include misogyny and consent. They find out about the impact of knife crime and alcohol. Pupils receive regular careers advice. Most pupils achieve positive next steps into education or work.

Trustees monitor the performance of the school. They are well informed about pupils' attendance and behaviour. Trustees check pupils' academic progress. It is compared to their starting points to ensure that all pupils are making positive progress. Staff speak highly of leaders' support to manage their workload. Leaders consult with staff about any changes they may need to make to routines. Staff report that they have enough time to complete their responsibilities. Staff feel that they receive appropriate training to support their professional development. Staff feel confident that they are able to meet pupils' needs.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders' checks on adults before their employment are rigorous. Systems to help, identify and manage pupils' needs begin at admission. Leaders gather information from families and home schools to build a picture of pupils' needs. Staff develop strong relationships with pupils. This helps them to spot any safeguarding concerns.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe while using technology. They have a clear understanding of the risks they face in the community. Staff are regularly updated about safeguarding matters. Training ensures their practice remains sharp. If staff have concerns about the safety and welfare of a pupil, they know what to do.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders have developed a core curriculum which focuses on English, mathematics and science. Pupils also study a range of vocational subjects. This means there are fewer academic subjects available to pupils. Leaders should further develop the curriculum to ensure that pupils can access a broader range of academic subjects.
- The attendance of most pupils shows demonstrable improvements from their starting points. However, overall, school attendance is too low. Too many pupils miss valuable learning time when they are not in school. Leaders must strengthen their approaches to promote regular attendance. They should further develop their work with parents to overcome any barriers to attendance to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 good in July 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	141140
<b>Local authority</b>	Leeds
<b>Inspection number</b>	10242206
<b>Type of school</b>	Alternative provision
<b>School category</b>	Academy free school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	8 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	116
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Steve Hodsman
<b>Head of Academy</b>	Ed Staton
<b>Executive Principal</b>	Jo Pittard
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ellandacademy.org.uk">www.ellandacademy.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 and 14 July 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The Elland Academy is an alternative provision for pupils aged between eight and 16 years.
- The school is part of Delta Academies Trust.
- A small number of pupils attending the provision have an education, health and care plan. The number frequently fluctuates as pupils move in and out of the provision.
- The school uses one registered and five unregistered alternative education providers.
- The school measures itself against the Gatsby benchmarks to ensure that pupils receive high-quality careers advice.
- 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 executive principal, the head of the academy, members of the senior leadership team, subject leaders and teachers.
- The lead inspector met with members of the board of trustees in an on-screen meeting.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also closely scrutinised the provision for reading.
- The lead inspector met with the school's designated safeguarding lead. The inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding records, relevant policies and other safeguarding documentation. The inspector reviewed the processes leaders use to identify and help pupils who need support. In addition, the inspector scrutinised the school's records of checks carried out on adults who work at the school.
- The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and development plans.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils, staff and parents. This included any free-text responses.

## Inspection team

David Mills, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Matthew Vellensworth

His Majesty's Inspector

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