

Inspection of XP East

Middle Bank, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN4 5NG

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 June 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

The principal of this school is Claira Salter. This school is part of XP Trust Limited, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Gwyn ap Harri, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Stephen Cooper Bielby.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are welcomed into a close-knit community at this distinctive school. Pupils show compassion and are concerned for the well-being of others in their 'crew'. In addition to some subject-specific lessons, pupils also study 'expeditions' that link learning across different subjects under topic themes. The vision behind this offer is that it allows pupils to see the connections between subjects, and to link their learning to future employment.

Although pupils benefit from a noteworthy personal development offer, they do not make the progress that they are capable of in the academic curriculum. As a consequence, too many pupils underachieve in external examinations and assessments. The school has recently put in place a number of measures to address this, but it is too early to see their impact.

Pupils show very high levels of respect to each other and to staff. They frequently contribute to the life of the school and the wider community. Pupils are trained to hold each other to account for their actions. Pupils feel safe at the school.

Pupils enjoy an extensive range of opportunities to develop their character and understanding of the world. For example, pupils joining the school in Year 7 receive a team-building induction that takes them on expeditions to the Welsh mountains. Pupils present at climate conferences, examining themes of sustainability. Pupils receive a high level of personalised careers advice and support.

The sixth-form offer is unique. Sixth-form students attend one of two off-site provisions. Sixth-form students make better academic progress than pupils in younger year groups.

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

The school provides a unique topic-based curriculum which emphasises creativity and the relevance of learning to local and global themes. The curriculum 'expeditions' encourage pupils to see the wider significance of their work. Pupils produce highly creative products that demonstrate their learning. The school has carefully mapped the curriculum to ensure that pupils learn an appropriate breadth and range of knowledge and skills.

The school has introduced new policies to improve the consistency of lessons. For example, teachers have been trained to use an 'ACDC' (activate, construct, demonstrate and consolidate) approach in lessons. Retrieval tasks have been introduced to support pupils to remember what they have been taught. The school is developing greater consistency in assessment and feedback through teacher questioning, methods of assessment and analysis of assessment data. However, this is still variable in some areas of the curriculum. The school recognises that there is more work to do to provide sufficient challenge for pupils with high prior attainment.

The school provides comprehensive support for the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A small but notable number of pupils, many of whom have SEND, currently access a range of alternative provision. Staff take steps to ensure that pupils at alternative provision access much of the strong personal development offer.

Pupils' outcomes in external examinations, for example in both English and mathematics, are poor. The school has recently made changes to the curriculum in an attempt to improve the progress that pupils make. For example, a new scheme of learning has been adopted in mathematics. Changes have been made to the English curriculum to ensure sufficient coverage of literature, such as Shakespeare. Pupils are beginning to benefit from these changes, but it is too soon to see the impact on published outcomes in external examinations and assessments.

The school has recently launched strategies that prioritise reading. For example, pupils are provided with recommended books to read in their pastoral 'crew' sessions. The school has designated specific time for reading throughout the day. Pupils who are weak readers are identified and assessed. However, there is currently a lack of precision around the support they receive.

Sixth-form students receive the majority of their provision from two external providers. Students attending Harrison College develop their work skills to prepare for future employment. Students attending Higher Rhythm study music technology and extended project qualifications. Students make good progress with their studies and are highly appreciative of the opportunities they have been given. They also contribute towards community action projects that take place in a range of locations, such as Yorkshire Wildlife Park, Doncaster Racecourse and forest school developments at local primary schools. Following the previous inspection in 2021, the school has improved the quality assurance procedures for the sixth-form provision.

Pupils' behaviour, at both the main school and off-site settings, is exemplary. Pupils have highly positive relationships with their teachers and with each other. They are nurtured to have compassion and respect for each other. The school provides tailored support for those pupils who struggle to regulate their behaviour. Pupils are expected to apologise to their peers and teachers for poor behaviour in community meetings. They are encouraged to appreciate each other and 'make a stand' to address undesirable character traits. Pupils attend school regularly.

The school provides an exceptional programme of personal development. Pupils' character development is prioritised through every aspect of the school. Pupils are placed into small pastoral 'crew' groups that meet daily. They learn about a wide range of social, spiritual and current affair themes in these meetings. Opportunities for pupils to express their creativity are embedded into the curriculum. For example, pupils have produced work which is displayed in local museums and sold in bookshops. Pupils receive a thorough careers programme that prepares them for future education, employment or training opportunities.

Most staff are positive about their workload and the support they receive from leaders. Staff receive regular training and early career teachers are well supported. Governors and trustees fulfil their statutory duties. They support and challenge leaders. The school has engaged with wider organisations to support further improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Methods of assessment and feedback are not yet consistent across the curriculum. Consequently, the identification of gaps in pupils' knowledge, and the extent to which pupils are supported to address these gaps, is not consistent. The school should ensure that staff training and further quality assurance ensures that methods of assessment and feedback are consistent across the curriculum.
- Recent changes to improve the quality of the academic curriculum are in their early stages and have not yet shown the desired impact. These changes include plans to ensure that all pupils make the progress they are capable of. The school should ensure that it continues to embed improvements to the curriculum to improve the progress that pupils make, including in the outcomes they achieve in external examinations and assessments.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	143916
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10313564
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	288
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	43
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stephen Cooper Bielby
Principal	Claira Salter
Website	www.xpeast.org
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 October 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the XP School Trust Limited. XP East is located immediately adjacent to XP School (URN 140964).
- The current principal of XP East was appointed in April 2022. The principal is also the principal of XP School.
- XP East uses 10 unregistered and one registered provider of alternative education.
- Sixth-form students attend off-site provision at Harrison College and Higher Rhythm.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and

engagement 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.
- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, other leaders, staff and pupils. They met with governors and trustees. They met with the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum 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 visited both off-site provisions for sixth-form students. Inspectors visited lessons and spoke with leaders, teachers and students.
- Inspectors visited one of the alternative provisions used by the school. An inspector reviewed leaders' oversight of all pupils at alternative provision.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; considered the views of parents and carers; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

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