

Inspection of The Morley Academy

Fountain Street, Morley, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS27 0PD

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 2024
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The principal of this school is Adam Ryder. This school is part of The Gorse Academies Trust (TGAT), which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Sir John Townsley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Anne McAvan.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since May 2013. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils attending The Morley Academy benefit from an outstanding quality of education. The school's motto of 'exceptional, every day' is lived and breathed by everyone in the community.

The school's broad, challenging curriculum is taught by expert teachers. Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are excellent. Pupils achieve especially well across all subjects. Pupils' performance in external tests and assessments is impressive.

Pupils are exceptionally proud to attend school. They attend regularly. They feel safe throughout school. They behave well. Bullying is rare and dealt with swiftly. Relationships between staff and pupils are harmonious.

Pupils benefit from a rigorous personal development offer. In addition to a rich personal, health, social and economic education (PSHE) curriculum, pupils also have access to a vast array of additional opportunities. These include rowing, karate and music jam clubs. Such experiences significantly enhance pupils' talents and interests.

The support that pupils receive to develop their awareness of the world around them is first class. In addition to learning multiple languages, including Mandarin Chinese, pupils access an extensive array of regional, national and international trips. Some pupils were keen to tell inspectors about their recent visits to Prague, Singapore and New York City.

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

Leaders are exceptionally ambitious. The school's curriculum is rich and challenging. Almost all pupils in key stage 4 study a modern foreign language. The proportion of pupils in key stage 4 studying the English Baccalaureate suite of challenging subjects is well above the national average. The ambition seen in the curriculum extends to all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Subject leaders have crafted interesting and well-sequenced schemes of learning. This curriculum is then brought alive by highly trained teachers. Lessons are rich in vocabulary and full of opportunities designed to help pupils recall and retain existing and new learning. Assessment and questioning are carefully used in all lessons to help monitor pupils' learning and address any misconceptions.

The needs of pupils with SEND are well known by staff. Leaders liaise closely with these pupils, and their families, to ensure that any barriers to learning and engagement are overcome. Staff are regularly trained to deepen their understanding of different types of need.

Reading is high profile throughout school. In addition to dedicated reading lessons and appropriate intervention sessions for less-confident readers, all subjects dedicate lesson time to showcase the importance of reading. Within lessons, 'purple zone' activities, which

are designed to promote independence and resilience, are also used to reinforce effective reading strategies.

Pupils' learning is rich and impressive. Pupils achieve highly at the school. In lessons, pupils' work is of a consistently high quality across all subjects. Pupils' understanding of what they have been taught is impressive. At the end of key stage 4, pupils achieve exceptionally well in external tests and assessments. This includes vulnerable pupils such as those who are disadvantaged and those who have additional needs.

Pupils' behaviour is similarly impressive. A comprehensive pastoral support system is in place for when pupils need support and guidance. Rates of attendance are high. Pupils are provided with a wealth of information and advice to help them make informed decisions about their next steps in education.

The wider PSHE curriculum is worthy of sharing. Dedicated 'Be SMART' days allow pupils to deepen their understanding of the world around them. Important topics such as relationships and sex education, online safety, criminal exploitation and managing healthy lifestyles are covered in depth. Pupils also develop a comprehensive understanding of some of life's differences and similarities through dedicated 'ethics, philosophy and religion' lessons.

Opportunities to be a pupil leader at the school are vast. An extensive number of speakers come into school to motivate pupils. For example, chefs from the Royal Navy have given demonstrations in food technology lessons to showcase one type of career in catering. A noteworthy array of clubs and trips are on offer to pupils. The senior choir has recently visited Prague. Some older pupils studying Mandarin Chinese are planning for a forthcoming trip to China. More locally, visits to places such as the Yorkshire Sculpture Park are a crucial part of subject curriculums. As part of the history curriculum, virtual reality technology allows pupils to 'visit' Auschwitz without leaving their classrooms. Almost all pupils take up these opportunities. Whole-school performances within school, most recently 'We Will Rock You', and out of school, such as at the 'Gorse Shakespeare Festival', allow pupils to perform in front of others. The number of pupils who take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme is remarkably high.

The school's leadership is exemplary. Leaders from the school, and from TGAT, are rightly proud of the school. The board of trustees, supported by a group of local governors, holds leaders to account and has effective oversight of the school. Staff thoroughly enjoy working at the school. They are proud to be part of such an exemplary institution.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	136392
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10315562
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,431
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anne McAvan
Chair of governing body	Karen Lawson
CEO of the trust	Sir John Townsley
Principal	Adam Ryder
Website	www.morley.leeds.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 and 2 May 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The Morley Academy is one of 15 schools in TGAT.
- The school previously ran a sixth-form provision, and as such is registered to admit pupils up to the age of 18. The sixth form is not currently in operation and at the time of this inspection, the age range of pupils at the school was 11 to 16.
- The school uses two providers of alternative provision to support a small number of pupils. Both of these providers are registered with the Department for Education and are subject to inspection by Ofsted.
- 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and support staff. Leaders from the trust, including the CEO and deputy CEO, were met as part of the inspection. The lead inspector also met with representatives from the board of trustees and the local governing body.
- Throughout the inspection, inspectors met with groups of pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, modern foreign languages, and art, design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects. An inspector met with subject leaders in performing arts, business studies and physical education. Additional visits look place to lessons in science, performing arts, music, geography, computer science, business studies and ethics, philosophy and religion.
- The support provided for pupils with SEND was considered. A meeting was also held with leaders responsible for the use of the pupil premium. Several lesson visits focused specifically on the impact of leaders' strategies with these pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- An inspector spoke to one of the providers of alternative provision.
- The views of pupils, staff, and parents and carers were also captured through the use of inspection surveys.

Inspection team

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