

Inspection of Dixons Brooklands Academy

Moor Road, Wythenshawe, Manchester, Greater Manchester M23 9BP

Inspection dates:	26 and 27 November 2024
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Kristy Gardner. This school is part of Dixons Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Luke Sparkes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Michael Blackburn.

What is it like to attend this school?

Raised expectations are helping to change the school's culture. In recent years, pupils' experiences of school have improved considerably. However, the school recognises that there is more to do to ensure that all pupils receive a good-quality education and that pupils' behaviour and attendance meet the school's high expectations.

Most pupils recognise that the school has improved in recent years. Many are happy and enjoy school. Inspectors spoke to pupils who said that they now feel safe. Most pupils said that if they raise a concern, it is dealt with well by staff.

The school has given careful thought to how pupils learn, and it has designed subject curriculums accordingly. However, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This is because there is inconsistency in how well the curriculum is delivered across the school.

Standards of behaviour are improving because the school has established clear expectations for pupils' conduct. Nonetheless, some staff do not apply the school's behaviour systems consistently well. At times, lessons are still impacted by low-level disruption.

Opportunities for pupils to contribute to the school community are growing. For example, pupils enjoy sharing their views during pupil council meetings. They know that they have a strong voice in the school.

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

The school, along with the trust, has an ambitious vision to help pupils to overcome the barriers to education that they face. The school's persistent focus on its key priorities is making an encouraging difference to the quality of education that pupils receive. For example, a growing number of pupils gain qualifications in the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects. However, the school has not ensured that all parents and carers understand the rationale for the changes that have been made.

In 2023, pupils in Year 11 performed significantly below the national average. Although the school has worked to revise the curriculum, it has not securely embedded these changes in all subjects and year groups. The school has clarified what pupils should learn and when. It has identified the important concepts that staff should revisit so that pupils remember what they have learned. However, there are variations in how well the curriculum is implemented.

Teachers routinely use whole-school strategies, such as 'do it now' tasks, to revisit previous learning and prepare pupils for what comes next. However, these activities sometimes lack ambition and do not encourage pupils to extend their ideas independently. Added to this, some teachers do not encourage pupils to think more deeply or explain their ideas. Others move learning on before pupils have secured the knowledge that they need for future learning. This means that while some pupils achieve well, others struggle to remember what they have learned, particularly when that learning is less recent.

The school identifies pupils' needs and provides staff with information and strategies to use in the classroom. However, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have mixed experiences in lessons. Some staff are confident in adapting activities so that pupils with SEND learn well. Other staff need further guidance on how to meet the needs of all pupils. The school has identified this and is working to provide further training and support for staff.

Reading is considered a priority for all pupils to be able to access the curriculum. Pupils who struggle to read are identified swiftly. The introduction of a new phonics programme, although in its early stages, is providing support for those pupils who need it. Across the school, pupils are supported to ensure they have the reading knowledge to access all subjects successfully.

The school has reduced the number of suspensions, although they remain high. It has introduced more strategies to intervene at the earlier stages of poor behaviour. The school works closely with local partners to identify alternatives to suspension, using it only as a last resort.

The school has developed a range of approaches to improve pupils' rates of attendance. It encourages pupils to understand their own attendance and its impact. These efforts are helping some pupils to attend more regularly. However, too many pupils are persistently absent.

The school prioritises pupils' personal development. Pupils spoke positively about what they learn through this programme, including the range of ways people can differ from one another. Pupils have a thorough understanding of the difference between positive and unhealthy relationships. They benefit from a range of high-quality enrichment activities and opportunities that prepare them well for the future. The school provides useful careers advice and guidance about the courses and jobs that pupils can pursue after leaving school.

The school and trust leaders are committed to raising outcomes for all pupils. They have clear priorities for school improvement and have put effective plans in place. The school and the trust have been mindful of staff's workload while implementing these plans. They openly acknowledge the challenges that they face as they work to realise their ambitions in every area of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is variation in how well the curriculum is implemented. In a few areas, the school's teaching strategies are not fully embedded. In others, teachers introduce new learning before pupils are ready. Consequently, some pupils, including some with SEND, do not achieve as highly as they could. The school should enhance teachers' understanding of its chosen teaching methods so that they are fully equipped to deliver the curriculum consistently well.
- While the school utilises robust systems and processes to improve attendance, some pupils, including pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, still miss too much school. This has a detrimental impact on their learning. The school must ensure that parents and pupils understand the importance of attending school regularly.
- Some staff do not apply the behaviour policy consistently well. As a result, a minority of pupils frequently distract others. This disrupts learning for other pupils. The school should ensure that staff implement the agreed behaviour strategies effectively so that pupils can learn well in lessons.
- The school and the trust are making considerable strides in transforming the school's culture and ethos. However, there are some parents who do not recognise and understand the extent of these improvements or the reasons behind them. The school should continue providing parents with regular opportunities to engage in the life and improvement of the school.

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	148965
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10337723
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,020
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Michael Blackburn
CEO of the trust	Luke Sparkes
Headteacher	Kristy Gardner
Website	www.dixonsbk.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Dixons Brooklands Academy joined Dixons Academies Trust in January 2022. When its predecessor school, Manchester Health Academy, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate for overall effectiveness.
- The school uses four registered alternative providers and three unregistered alternative providers.
- 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.
- 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, trust leads, senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers. The lead inspector also met with those with responsibility for governance, including the chair of the trust and some trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, technology and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects. They looked at samples of pupils' work in these subjects.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to the staff survey. Inspectors considered the views of pupils through discussions held with pupils during the inspection.

Inspection team

Rebecca Sharples, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
David Roberts	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Slater	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Mitchell	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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