

# Inspection of Ilkley Grammar School

Cowpasture Road, Ilkley, West Yorkshire LS29 8TR

---

Inspection dates:	10 and 11 December 2024
The quality of education	<b>Outstanding</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Carly Purnell. This school is part of Moorlands Learning 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), Helen Williams and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alan Halsall.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Ilkley Grammar School is an amazing school. This is a school where every pupil gets a chance to shine. Academic success is very high. An extensive personal development offer ensures pupils achieve their personal best. School sports, trips and a vast range of clubs, including Model United Nations, creative writing and musical theatre, enable pupils to flourish.

Pupils enjoy their lessons and behave in a way that enables deep, meaningful classroom learning. In business and economics, pupils discuss the impact of business ideas on society and politics in a carefully designed curriculum that goes beyond the specification. Staff are passionate about their subjects, and the impact of this is seen in the classroom. Pupils in all years explore subject topics by asking thoughtful questions and working together with complete focus. Whether pupils excel, or need extra help, this school supports them to fulfil their potential.

The school's sixth-form students help set the positive tone for the whole school. They interact with younger pupils daily through leadership roles and at social times. They model kindness and teamwork. They mentor younger pupils and help them believe in themselves and what they are able to achieve. This supports pupils to experience and be proud of their success.

The school has an on-site specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This resource provision is fully integrated into the school and successfully supports the whole school's ambition that every pupil is a valued member of the school community.

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

The school offers a rich curriculum that ensures all students achieve well - there is ambition for all. Pupils build a complex understanding of subject knowledge over time. Teachers use many strategies to help pupils learn. These include integrating technology into lessons to enhance the learning experience and support the delivery of the curriculum. The strategies enable pupils to discuss and debate through thought-provoking discussions, a key aspect of the school's curriculum aims. Staff check pupils' understanding in different ways. In the humanities, staff use this information to refine their curriculum and provide pupils with targeted support so that they know how to succeed as learners and historians or geographers. Pupils achieve excellent, sustained outcomes over time. This is partly due to the holistic approach to the curriculum and bespoke, individualised, pastoral care.

The school is fully inclusive. Staff believe every pupil can succeed, no matter their background or any challenge they may face. The school has effective dedicated support spaces in the school that provide extra help for vulnerable pupils, in addition to the specialist resource provision. Teachers are experts at adapting lessons to meet pupils' needs and help every pupil learn.

Reading is prioritised. Swift and effective help is provided for pupils who struggle with reading. In English, pupils study a rich choice of literature as part of their sophisticated curriculum, which helps build pupils' cultural capital. Complex texts and literary articles are used as part of each subject. This contributes to pupils' learning of complex subject vocabulary and provides them with the necessary language to discuss and debate different topics.

The school is a calm environment where pupils behave exceptionally well. Staff consistently implement the school's behaviour system. This helps pupils understand the importance of self-discipline, and they are able to demonstrate this. Pupils care and show respect for each other.

The sixth-form provision is a shining light within the school. The curriculum offer available to students is comprehensive and caters to a range of interests. The school provides countless opportunities to develop skills that equip students very well for their next step in life. The students enjoy the exemplary extracurricular offer afforded to the whole school, such as representing the school at regional and national sports competitions, and science and mathematics competitions.

Pupils have strong attendance. The school uses detailed tracking to check pupil attendance, and then meets with families to identify barriers to attending school. Staff are proactive in supporting families to remove barriers, offering support such as transport to school, wraparound care and mental health support. This approach is very effective, with very few pupils missing too much school.

The school offers many activities that go beyond everyday classroom learning. Pupils can join numerous sports, music and drama groups and take on multiple leadership roles. These activities enable pupils to develop important life skills, such as responsibility and public speaking. The school offers work experience and extensive trips both locally and internationally. These opportunities help pupils understand and be prepared for the real world. Pupils learn about fundamental British values and how to be active citizens. Personal development is intrinsically linked to the community's needs and the school's values. The school draws on various expertise, for example welcoming guest speakers who engage and support pupils to make well-informed decisions about topical issues.

Pupils are knowledgeable about different beliefs and cultures as a result of the curriculum and well-designed activities. For example, these include interviews with local faith leaders in 'Talking Heads' sessions. The school also offers well-considered career support, including a 'Future Fest' career fair. Extensive links with industry and higher education help the pupils to make informed decisions. Work experience is linked to mock interviews, and pupils can have their questions answered in personalised careers meetings. Pupils are extremely well-informed and use the school's full personal development offer when making choices regarding their next steps.

School leaders have a clear and ambitious vision, which is instrumental in helping all pupils succeed. Leaders empower teachers to develop their skills through focused and

highly effective professional development. They provide strong personal and professional care and create a culture where everyone feels valued and supported to develop. Governors have the skills and knowledge to support the school and have a positive working relationship with staff. This helps enable them to perform their role extremely effectively.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136905
<b>Local authority</b>	Bradford
<b>Inspection number</b>	10323023
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	2,172
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	593
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Alan Halsall
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Helen Williams
<b>Headteacher</b>	Carly Purnell
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ilkeleygrammarschool.com">www.ilkeleygrammarschool.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	19 and 20 January 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school currently uses four registered alternative provisions.
- The school has an on-site specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. The provision supports pupils with autism.
- 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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with members of the trust board, the local governing body and the chief executive officer.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher. They also met with other senior and middle leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding, personal development, careers, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history, geography, and business including economics. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at provision in a range of subjects only studied by students in the sixth form, including meeting with leaders, visiting lessons and speaking with students.
- Members of the inspection team looked at a range of documentation regarding the support pupils with SEND receive. Inspectors looked at the quality of the provision for pupils with SEND across all aspects of school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including minutes of governance and trustee meetings.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information regarding behaviour. Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils at social times.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils and staff formally and informally throughout the inspection. Responses to staff, pupil and parent surveys were considered by the inspection team.
- 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.

## Inspection team

Richard Jones, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Liz Cresswell

Ofsted Inspector

Lindsay Oyston

Ofsted Inspector

Jayne Gaunt

Ofsted Inspector

Julie McGrane

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2024