Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Whitcliffe Mount, A Share Academy

Turnsteads Avenue, Cleckheaton, West Yorkshire BD19 3AQ

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 March 2025

Outcome

Whitcliffe Mount, A Share Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Rebecca Hesmondhalgh. This school is part of Share Multi-Academy 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), John McNally, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Daniel Quinn. There is also an executive headteacher, Jenny Carr, who is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this welcoming school. Pupils recognise the improvements the school continues to make. This is particularly so for older pupils, who can see improvement over time. Pupils value the support they get from their teachers. They are proud to attend the school.

Many pupils meet the school's high expectations for achievement. Pupils recognise the increased expectations for their behaviour. They enjoy learning in purposeful classrooms. Many pupils achieve well in public examinations. As a result, they are well prepared for their next steps. An increasing number of pupils study a suite of more academic qualifications known as the English Baccalaureate. Pupils understand how their subject choices support them in their chosen next steps.

Pupils value the school's motto of 'Belong'. They know that someone cares for them and that they are a part of this school community. They demonstrate the values that underpin 'Belong'. For example, they show high levels of engagement in their learning. Pupils receive effective support to help them explore options for their future. This helps them develop aspirations for jobs they would like to do. These include becoming a pilot or a vet. These high aspirations help pupils understand the importance of their education.

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

The school has refined the ambitious curriculum. It identifies the important knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn. Staff develop a sharp understanding of the knowledge pupils arrive at school with. They use this to build pupils' understanding well over time. Staff provide regular opportunities for pupils to review their prior learning. This helps pupils to form connections between their learning. For example, Year 7 pupils use what they know about fractions to help them learn about factorisation.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Staff swiftly identify pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read. The school puts in place bespoke interventions to help pupils to catch up with their peers. This helps pupils to access texts and develop a love of reading. Pupils are proud to celebrate their 'graduation' from the reading intervention programme. Pupils read a range of texts that help them learn about topics such as prejudice. These texts, chosen thoughtfully by the school, assist pupils in understanding the differences in the world. As a result, pupils understand and respect difference.

The school checks what pupils remember over time. This enables staff to identify misconceptions and address these. This ensures that pupils develop more precise knowledge over time.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the ambitious curriculum. Staff are well informed in how to support pupils. When needed, staff provide appropriate support for pupils. For example, adults model how to respond to tasks set. This helps pupils to structure effective responses. The school identifies that improving the progress and attendance of some disadvantaged pupils is a key priority. There are some signs of progress in this area. However, some strategies are still embedding and are yet to have the desired impact. There is further work to do.

Pupils in the school take on leadership responsibilities with pride. 'Student leaders' gave input into the production of the one-way system in school. This has helped pupils move well around the building. 'Next Gen' leaders lead different projects. They recently supported peers who are young carers with sessions on developing cost-effective recipes. These vital opportunities help pupils to develop their leadership skills. They also develop the sense of community in the school. This is further enhanced by the recently introduced 'Belong Accreditation'. This school qualification encourages pupils to develop different aspects of their character. Pupils enjoy reviewing their progress with this during form time.

Leaders and those responsible for governance have high aspirations for all pupils. The impact of leaders at all levels is evident in the improved outcomes that pupils achieve. Governors and trustees support and challenge the school. This work ensures there is a sharp focus on school improvement. Adults in the school recognise that they are valued. They are proud to work in 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)

- Some strategies to support disadvantaged pupils are still new. They have not yet narrowed gaps for disadvantaged pupils. This means that some of these pupils do not yet achieve or attend as well as their peers. The school needs to further refine strategies and carefully monitor their impact to ensure that these gaps close further.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Whitcliffe Mount, to be good for overall effectiveness in December 2013.

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	149162
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10379425
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1232
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Daniel Quinn
CEO of the trust	John McNally
Headteacher	Rebecca Hesmondhalgh
Website	www.whitcliffemount.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Whitcliffe Mount, A Share Academy, converted to become an academy school in September 2022. When its predecessor school, Whitcliffe Mount School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good for overall effectiveness.
- There has been significant change in the leadership of the school since it joined Share Multi-Academy Trust in September 2022.
- The school makes use of eight alternative provisions, all of which are registered.
- 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

- 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.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher, executive headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO. He also met with members of the trust board, including the chair.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- The lead inspector considered the views of parents through the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspectors considered the views of staff and pupils through meetings held with them and through their responses to Ofsted's online survey.

Inspection team

Andrew Gibbins, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Paul Bell	Ofsted Inspector
Vicky Callaghan	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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