

# Dixons Allerton Academy

Rhodesway, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD8 0DH

## Inspection dates

5–6 March 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
16 to 19 study programmes	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The clear vision set by the principal permeates the school and is shared by pupils and staff.
- Effective action by leaders, including governors, and support from the trust have resulted in improvements to many aspects of the school.
- Robust checks by leaders on the quality of teaching and effective professional development for staff have resulted in good teaching across the school.
- Staff morale is high. Staff feel that leaders support them and consider their well-being.
- Pupils' outcomes have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged, make good progress across most subjects in the curriculum.
- Children in the early years are happy at school and are cared for well. They make good progress.
- Most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning and are proud of their school.
- Pupils typically have good levels of attendance and behave well.
- Sixth-form students make good progress because of effective teaching. However, leaders acknowledge the need to strengthen the personal development programme further in the sixth form.
- Although improving, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in humanities in the secondary phase does not match the stronger teaching in other subjects.
- Until very recently, the trust and the school's most senior leaders have not had effective strategic oversight of pupils who leave the school because their parents and carers have chosen to educate them at home.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - carefully scrutinising the information about pupils who are removed from the school's roll, including those who leave to be educated at home, so that any patterns can be identified in order that leaders, including governors, can determine whether any action is necessary to improve aspects of the school's work
  - sharpening records so that they precisely reflect the full range of actions taken by staff to safeguard pupils
  - further developing the opportunities for teachers and leaders to work together to share the good practice across the all-through school, particularly in relation to the quality of the curriculum.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in humanities so that secondary pupils make consistently strong progress in history and geography.
- Strengthen the sixth-form curriculum for personal development so that students are well supported to develop their self-esteem, confidence and independent learning skills.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Since his appointment in 2016, the principal has ensured that his vision to improve all aspects of the school is known and understood by staff and pupils. There is a culture of high expectations because leaders and staff are ambitious for all pupils. Leaders' actions, supported by the trust, have led to strong improvements in the quality of teaching, the curriculum and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.
- Leaders and staff place high importance on pupils achieving strong academic outcomes. Nonetheless, they place equal value on developing pupils' wider skills. For example, all Year 7 pupils learn to play the ukulele. Pupils express positive views about the wide range of extra-curricular activities, trips and visits on offer. However, pupils would welcome more opportunities to study creative and artistic subjects in Year 9.
- Pupils' social, moral and cultural understanding is developed well. Leaders have plans to develop the curriculum further to incorporate religious education for pupils in key stage 4 to enhance their spiritual understanding.
- Middle leaders are held fully to account. Thorough checks on teaching, together with high-quality professional development for staff, have improved the quality of teaching. However, leaders recognise the need to develop opportunities for staff to work together across the all-through school to share good practice, particularly in developing the curriculum.
- Leaders use assessment information effectively. For instance, middle leaders use information about pupils' learning to identify those who are at risk of underachieving. Leaders provide effective additional support to help these pupils to catch up.
- All staff who responded to the Ofsted online survey are proud to work at the school. Staff who made their views known to inspectors were clear that leaders are considerate of their well-being. Teachers at the early stage of their career feel very well supported. Consequently, staff morale is high.
- The primary physical education and sport funding has been used successfully to broaden the range of extra-curricular activities on offer and to increase pupils' participation in external sporting events and tournaments.
- Provision for pupils with SEND is effectively led. Pupils' needs are accurately identified and are well supported by both class-based teaching and additional intervention, including the use of external provision where required.
- Pupil mobility in the school is high compared with schools in similar contexts. Leaders follow the correct procedures before a pupil is removed from the school's roll. However, until very recently, the trust and the school's most senior leaders have not had sufficient oversight of those pupils who leave the school because their parents have decided to educate them at home. Information about these pupils, including their characteristics and their experiences in the school, is very variable. As a result, the trust and senior leaders do not have knowledge of any patterns or trends that may indicate whether improvements are needed, for example to the curriculum. The trust

acknowledges that the school's work in this area needs to improve. New systems are now in place to monitor pupil movement more closely.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors challenge leaders effectively to improve aspects such as pupils' progress and attendance. Governors have a good understanding of the progress made by pupils across this all-through school.
- Governors make sure that leaders use additional funding well to support pupils. Effective use of funding to support disadvantaged pupils has improved outcomes for these pupils in both the primary and secondary phase.
- Governors have a wide and appropriate skillset. Since the previous inspection, a governor with an education background has been recruited on to the governing body.
- Governors have limited knowledge of the reasons why pupils are taken off the school's roll. Consequently, they have not questioned leaders about whether pupil mobility indicates that aspects of the school's work need to improve.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders understand the safeguarding risks in the community and have established good links with the local police. Staff understand the important role they play in keeping pupils safe.
- Safeguarding training for staff is kept up to date through regular online training and weekly staff briefings. Staff understand the 'Prevent' duty risks in the local area. They are also aware of the dangers posed by 'county lines' gangs. Staff understand the signs to look out for which may suggest that a pupil is at risk of child criminal exploitation.
- A group of secondary pupils spoke to an inspector about how they learn to keep safe outside of school. For example, they found workshops from the local police on gangs and criminal exploitation useful. During the inspection, younger pupils were learning about safe cycling habits. These examples typify the school's age-appropriate curriculum to keep pupils safe.
- All the necessary pre-employment checks are carried out on staff before appointment to ensure that they are suitable to work with children.
- Leaders work with external agencies to provide appropriate support for pupils and their families. However, records do not consistently reflect the full extent of leaders' work and the impact of their actions.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved since the last inspection and is now good across all key stages.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Most teachers ensure that questioning probes pupils' understanding so that they think deeply about their learning.

- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. Most activities are planned to meet the individual needs of pupils. Pupils are confident in expressing their views and opinions.
- Topics of study are revisited, where necessary, to help pupils to make strong progress. Pupils told inspectors that this is effective in helping them to remember important facts and ideas.
- Pupils respond well to the feedback they receive from their teachers. This helps pupils to consolidate their learning over time.
- Pupils' writing skills are well developed across the curriculum. For example, there are opportunities in science for pupils to write at length. Pupils are given the opportunity to edit and improve their work.
- Teachers place high importance on pupils' understanding of subject-specific vocabulary. Staff check pupils' comprehension regularly and address any misconceptions that pupils may have.
- The quality of teaching and learning has improved in humanities in the secondary phase. However, there is further work to do to ensure that teaching in history and geography matches the higher standards seen in other subjects.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils who made their views known to inspectors say that they feel safe in school. Most pupils told inspectors that, if bullying does occur, it is dealt with by staff. However, a few pupils and parents do not share this view. The school's own records show that incidents of bullying are low. However, records show that, on occasion, sanctions are not consistently applied.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the school values of happiness, industry and responsibility and the 'keys to success' of mastery, self-determination and purpose. These are woven throughout the curriculum and referred to regularly in lessons and other activities.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors demonstrated respect and tolerance of different faiths. Primary-aged pupils indicated that they enjoy learning about different religions and cultures.
- Some pupils told inspectors that they occasionally hear homophobic language in school. Leaders are aware of this. They are raising the profile of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues within the school. For instance, some pupils who met with inspectors highlighted their involvement in LGBT history month.
- The progress and welfare of the few pupils who attend an alternative provider are closely monitored by leaders. Provision is carefully chosen to meet pupils' individual needs and, as a result, pupils benefit from their placements.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school site is well supervised during lesson changeovers and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Pupils conduct themselves well around the school site.
- Most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning. Pupils are well prepared for their lessons and most are engaged in their learning.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the behaviour policy, including the rewards and sanctions system. Older pupils told inspectors that behaviour has improved and incidents of low-level disruption are addressed promptly.
- The proportion of pupils excluded from school has declined this year. Typically, the rates of fixed-term exclusions are below the national average.
- Most pupils take pride in the presentation of their work. However, the presentation of pupils' work, especially that of boys, is more variable in history and geography in the secondary phase because teachers do not have consistently high expectations of pupils.
- Most pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils are punctual. Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Rates of persistent absence are below the national average. However, a higher proportion of Year 10 and 11 pupils are regularly absent from school compared to other year groups.
- Pupils wear their uniform smartly. Pupils show respect for the school environment. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere, particularly in the primary phase.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils in the primary and secondary phases make good progress from their different starting points in a range of subjects. Pupils with average and lower-than-average starting points make particularly good progress in their GCSE subjects.
- In 2016 and 2017, Year 11 pupils made progress in their GCSE subjects that was in the top 20% of schools nationally. In 2018, the progress made by Year 11 pupils in GCSE mathematics and science was also in the top 20% nationally. Progress made by secondary-phase pupils in science has improved markedly since the last inspection.
- In 2017 and 2018, a lower proportion of GCSE pupils studied the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) compared to the national average. However, because of changes to the curriculum, 54% of current Year 11 pupils now study the EBacc. Leaders are ambitious to increase this further and have plans to exceed the government's ambitions for EBacc study by 2022.
- In 2018, Year 11 pupils with SEND made good progress in their GCSE subjects. Disadvantaged pupils also made good progress due to effective teaching and good use of additional funding to support their achievement.
- In 2017 and 2018, the progress made by Year 11 pupils who speak English as an additional language was above that of similar pupils nationally.

- Pupils make strong progress in the development of their phonics skills. In 2017 and 2018, the proportion of Year 1 pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check was above the national average for all groups of pupils. High standards are being maintained for current pupils because of highly effective phonics teaching.
- Pupils' attainment in key stage 1 is broadly in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Work in pupils' books in key stages 1 and 2 reflects the fact that pupils continue to make good progress in the primary phase.
- Leaders, particularly in the primary phase, place high importance on the development of pupils' reading skills. Pupils read regularly. Year 7 pupils who need to catch up in their reading are well supported. Secondary pupils can access an impressive range of books and resources in 'The Bridge', the school library.
- Leaders use the Gatsby Benchmarks to audit the school's careers information, advice and guidance programme. Pupils have access to high-quality careers guidance to enable them to make informed decisions about their futures. As a result, the proportion of pupils not in education, employment or training at the end of Year 11 is low.
- The progress made by Year 11 pupils in humanities in the secondary phase has been below the national average for the last three years. Current pupils are making better progress because teaching is improving. However, pupils' progress in history and geography lags behind other subjects.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- Children in the early years are happy at school and cared for well. Clear and familiar routines ensure a calm and purposeful environment.
- Adults have very high expectations of children's behaviour. Consequently, children conduct themselves well, listen carefully and follow adults' instructions quickly. Children demonstrate good manners and are kind to each other.
- The learning environment in the early years is highly stimulating. High-quality resources promote mark-making and the development of children's early writing.
- Storytelling and the sharing of rhymes are features of the early years curriculum. During the inspection, children were able to recall rhymes to help them with their numeracy. They were able to sing these rhymes independently.
- The outdoor area provides a range of opportunities for children to extend and practise their reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- The teaching of phonics in the early years is highly effective. Phonics sessions meet the needs of all groups of children. Adults provide opportunities for children to apply their phonics knowledge and skills in different contexts.
- Leaders ensure that the early years welfare requirements are met.
- Parents who made their views known to inspectors are overwhelmingly positive about the early years. Leaders and staff have established strong relationships with parents. Parents are regularly updated about their children's progress. Parents particularly enjoy the opportunities to join their children for 'stay and play' sessions.

- Children make good progress from their starting points. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year is close to the national average and has improved over time. The proportion of children exceeding the early learning goals is also improving. Increasing attainment further is correctly prioritised in the school's improvement plans to ensure that as many children as possible are well prepared for Year 1.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

**Good**

- Leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for further improvement in the sixth form. Since the previous inspection, effective leadership and improvements to the quality of teaching and learning have led to improved outcomes for students.
- In 2018, in academic and vocational courses, students made better progress than students with similar starting points nationally. Current students continue to make good progress across their programmes of study.
- Students make good progress towards their resit GCSE English and mathematics qualifications.
- Leaders have addressed the historically weak retention rates of students on vocational and A-level courses. Leaders acknowledge that retention rates were often low because students were not on the right courses. Retention rates for current students are much higher.
- Teaching is effective in the sixth form. Because of effective feedback from staff, students understand how to improve their work. Teachers' questions probe and extend students' thinking and deepen their understanding. Students are keen to contribute to class discussions. They demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning.
- Sixth-form students' attendance has improved over the last three years. Students enjoy coming to school. They attend diligently to their work in lessons. They are polite in their interactions with each other and with their teachers. They dress smartly and show pride in their association with the sixth form.
- The school meets the requirements for the 16 to 19 programmes of study. Students have access to a wide range of non-qualification activities. All students in Year 12 complete a work experience placement. Enrichment activities include several volunteering opportunities, including the National Citizen Service. However, leaders recognise that there are some aspects of the personal development programme which could be strengthened further. For example, sixth-form students indicated that they would appreciate further opportunities to develop their self-esteem, self-confidence and independent learning skills.

## School details

Unique reference number	135866
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	10059055

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,843
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	248
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Lynn Barrett
Principal	Gary Dreher
Telephone number	01274 770 230
Website	<a href="http://www.dixonsaa.com">www.dixonsaa.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:gdreher@dixonsaa.com">gdreher@dixonsaa.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	10–11 November 2016

## Information about this school

- Dixons Allerton Academy is an all-through school and is part of Dixons Academy Charitable Trust.
- Responsibility for the school lies with the board of trustees. The school operates a local governing body. The structure of the trust's governance can be found on the trust's website.
- The chair of the local governing body is also a member of the board of trustees.
- The school is led by the principal, a head of secondary and a head of primary.

- The school currently educates pupils from Nursery to Year 5 in the primary phase. By September 2019, the school will have its first Year 6 cohort of pupils.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is slightly above the national average.
- A small number of secondary-phase pupils attend alternative education provision at Bradford Central Pupil Referral Unit, Bradford College, Prism, the Himmat Centre and the Skills and Training Centre.

## Information about this inspection

- Two Senior Her Majesty’s Inspectors visited the school, following the inspection in March, to gather further evidence.
- Inspectors visited a number of lessons in all key stages. Some lesson visits took place with senior leaders. Inspectors also looked at a wide range of pupils’ work across a range of subjects and year groups.
- Inspectors talked to pupils informally during breaktimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors also met formally with pupils in key stages 2, 3, 4 and 5.
- Inspectors listened to some primary and secondary pupils read.
- An inspector conducted telephone meetings with two alternative education providers.
- An inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust and the executive principal. An inspector also met with five members of the local governing body, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors talked to parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors took account of the 31 responses to the online survey, Parent View, including the 16 free-text comments. Inspectors held two telephone conversations with parents.
- Inspectors considered the 61 responses to the Ofsted staff survey.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation relating to the school’s work, including: the primary and secondary self-evaluation documents; the school improvement plan and position statement; information about current pupils’ progress; minutes of governing body meetings; and documents relation to safeguarding, behaviour, welfare and attendance.

## Inspection team

Michele Costello, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Katrina Gueli	Senior Her Majesty’s Inspector
Helen Lane	Senior Her Majesty’s Inspector
Wendy Bradford	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Cook	Ofsted Inspector
Janet Lunn	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Ashworth	Ofsted Inspector

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