

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Vale of York Academy

Rawcliffe Drive, Clifton Without, York, North Yorkshire YO30 6ZS

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 February 2025

Outcome

Vale of York Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Gillian Mills. This school is part of Hope Sentamu 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 Winn, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jane Lewis.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where an increasing number of pupils embody the school's ethos of 'always giving their best'. In lessons pupils are focused and behave well. They rise to the high expectations set by adults. The vast majority of pupils feel happy, safe and valued in school. There is an inclusive culture, where all are welcome, regardless of background.

The school is ambitious for what pupils can, and will, achieve. All pupils study a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils achieve well across the curriculum and want to succeed. They develop positive relationships with staff. The school has established clear routines, which pupils follow consistently. They generally behave well in the dining hall and around the school. Pupils are polite and respectful to visitors.

The school is ambitious for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Developments to the curriculum mean that learning is logically ordered from Year 7 to Year 11. This helps staff to build pupils' knowledge and skills securely over time.

Pupils extend their experiences through after school clubs, sporting activities, musical productions, concerts, and studying for the Duke of Edinburgh's award. Pupils develop leadership skills and help others. The student council actively seeks pupils' views and shares them with senior leaders.

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

Teachers use their knowledge to explain new ideas clearly in lessons. They deliver the curriculum as leaders intend. There are clearly established lesson structures which enable pupils to focus independently on their work. This is enabling more pupils to write well across the curriculum. In many subjects pupils produce independent extended writing tasks to a high standard. Teachers use modelling and scaffold work which helps pupils to feel confident with the work they produce. Pupils are supported to know and remember more. As a result, pupils remember their prior learning. Staff routinely question pupils and check precisely what pupils know.

The school accurately identifies where pupils need extra help, for example pupils with SEND. These pupils have access to the same curriculum as their peers. Most staff ensure that pupils with SEND are well supported in class. This helps these pupils to learn more as they move through the school. There is also additional work to support pupils' wider needs, for example with social and emotional health. Some pupils complete additional work in 'The Bridge' which helps them to manage and understand their feelings and any worries.

Reading is prioritised across the school. Although this is more successful in some areas than others. The school ensures that those who struggle with their reading are accurately identified. There are clear pathways of support for pupils who may find reading difficult. Trained staff ensure that they get the help that they need to catch up. The school also provides time for pupils in key stage 3 to improve their reading fluency and comprehension. However, the school does not provide some pupils with enough opportunities to read. In some subjects, the school does not provide enough texts to widen and deepen pupils' subject-specific knowledge.

The school works closely with families of those pupils whose behaviour or attendance needs to improve. As a result, the number of behavioural incidents is starting to decrease. The school monitors attendance carefully and puts measures in place to remove barriers to attending well. However, attendance of some pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, is not improving to be in line with other pupils.

The school has a well-designed personal, social, health education programme. Pupils learn about key topics such as tolerance and democracy. This helps them to be prepared for life in modern Britain. The careers education programme is well considered. Pupils learn about how different subjects link to different careers. Pupils access information about different qualifications from a range of providers. This helps pupils to make informed decisions about their next steps. As a result, the number of pupils who successfully remain in education, employment or training beyond school is high.

The trust, including those responsible for governance, provides the school with effective challenge and support. Staff are proud to work at the school. They value the opportunities shown to their development. They recognise that the school is doing what it can to help manage workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not ensure that some pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, attend school regularly enough. This means that these pupils do not access the same learning as their peers. The school should ensure that these pupils are supported to improve their rates of attendance.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to read independently and for subject-specific reading in the curriculum. This means that not enough pupils read widely and often and do not develop their subject-specific vocabulary as well as they could. The school should ensure that pupils read a range of texts in classrooms. It should also provide further opportunities for pupils to read their own chosen texts more regularly.

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 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in November 2019.

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	143864
Local authority	York
Inspection number	10346671
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	706
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jane Lewis
CEO of the trust	Helen Winn
Principal	Gillian Mills
Website	https://voy.hslt.academy
Dates of previous inspection	13 and 14 November 2019

Information about this school

- The school uses four alternative providers for some pupils. One of these is a registered provider and three are unregistered 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

- 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. The 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 of safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- The inspectors met with the headteacher. The lead inspector also spoke with the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust and with the chair and vice-chair of the trust board.
- The inspectors visited a number of lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors visited internal behaviour and support spaces in the school.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including behaviour logs, attendance records, school development plans and self-evaluation documents.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents through responses to Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspectors gathered the views of staff through Ofsted's staff survey, as well as discussions with staff and pupils conducted throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Jessica McKay, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Katie North

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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