

Dixons Allerton Academy

Rhodesway, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD8 0DH

Inspection dates 12–13 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Students do not make consistently good progress in all of their subjects in Key Stage 4. Over time, progress in mathematics, science, history and geography requires improvement.
- Teaching requires improvement, as expectations of students are not consistently high enough. The work set for students, particularly the most able, is not always challenging enough to ensure they make good progress.
- Questioning is not consistently effective. It is not always used skilfully enough to deepen the understanding of all students.
- Marking does not consistently provide students with precise guidance on how to improve their work. Teachers do not always insist that students respond to improve their work.
- The effectiveness of the sixth form requires improvement. Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching has been inconsistent and, as a result, achievement has not been consistently good in all subjects and courses.
- The assessment of students' achievement in the sixth form is not sufficiently rigorous.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the early years make good progress and are well prepared for their next stage of education.
- There is some good and outstanding teaching in the academy.
- Those pupils in Year 1 are making good progress.
- Students behave well. They say they feel safe and enjoy being at the academy. The academy is a harmonious learning community.
- The personal development of students is strong, due to highly effective experiences that promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The innovative school library is making a strong contribution to students' enjoyment of reading.
- Parents have a high level of confidence in the work the academy is doing to improve education for their children.
- Leadership, including governors and the sponsor, have developed a strong sense of purpose to drive the school forward. As a result, teaching and achievement are improving. The academy is in a stronger position than at the time of the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 40 lessons taught by 37 teachers. Four observations were undertaken jointly with a leader from the academy. Inspectors observed a range of activities and provision for disabled students and those with special educational needs.
- Inspectors spoke to three groups of students about their learning in lessons and their safety in the academy. Inspectors also listened to two groups of students reading.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, five other governors and the Executive Principal of the multi-academy trust. Meetings were held with academy staff, including middle and senior leaders.
- Inspectors also looked at the academy’s review of its own performance, its development plan, academy policies and the minutes of governors’ meetings. Inspectors also considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors looked at students’ work in lessons and scrutinised samples of students’ books.
- Inspectors analysed the 24 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). There were 71 questionnaires completed by staff, these were considered by inspectors. Inspectors also looked at parents’ responses to recent academy questionnaires. In addition, an inspector spoke with the parents of children in early years.

Inspection team

James McGrath, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Mary Lanovy-Taylor	Additional Inspector
Tudor Griffiths	Additional Inspector
Paul Welford	Additional Inspector
Linda Magrath	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is a sponsored academy. It is a member of the Dixons multi-academy trust.
- The academy moved to a new site in September 2013. Early years children have been in the academy since September 2013 and attend full-time. Key Stage 1 pupils have attended since September 2014. The academy has catered for pupils in Key Stages 3, 4, and 5 since it opened in September 2009.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well-above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are from Asian backgrounds; a few are White British. The majority of students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the academy at other than the usual times is above average.
- Bradford College is the alternative provider used by the academy. The academy manages two centres that provide offsite learning for a very small number of students.
- The academy holds the School Library Inspiration award 2014.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standard, which sets out the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to staffing, including in relation to middle leadership.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics, science, history and geography, so that it is consistently good, in order to ensure good progress for all students by making sure that:
 - the marking of students' work always tells them what they need to do to improve
 - students have sufficient opportunities to respond to teachers' written comments
 - planning and work match the needs and abilities of all students closely
 - there are high expectations of what all students, particularly the most able, can achieve
 - questioning is skilful, draws out what students understand and deepens the knowledge of all
 - students' achievement in the sixth form is assessed accurately and rigorously.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of what is working well. Plans for improvement correctly indicate the main priorities and actions are clear. Success is emerging in many areas with progress improving strongly at Key Stage 3 and in English throughout the academy.
- The Principal has the full support of staff in driving forward improvements. She has taken effective action to eradicate inadequate teaching and to improve subject leadership. Staff have increased their ambitions for students and a closer check is kept on students' progress. Behaviour has improved, giving a secure platform for learning. The quality of teaching is improving throughout the school and there are improvements in achievement, including achievement in the sixth form. However, the impact on examination results at Key Stage 4 is not yet fully evident.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been many new middle leaders. Those at the academy for a few years have had a strong impact. For example, progress in English is consistently good and standards attained by disabled students and those with special educational needs have improved rapidly in the last year. There is evidence that more recently appointed middle leaders are having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and achievement too but, there has been too little time to see this in the results at the end of Key Stage 4.
- Performance management for teachers is robust and identifies the skills they need to improve. There is bespoke training for newly-qualified teachers, which is supporting them well. A performance review system is in place for all other staff in the academy. The academy works closely with other schools in the multi-academy trust to share best practices and provide a wide range of training opportunities to meet the needs and career aspirations of all who work in the academy. This is a good example of the academy's commitment to equality of opportunity for all.
- Changes to the curriculum over the past two years show that it is now meeting the needs of all students better and supporting improvements in achievement. Students are given good information, advice and guidance to select their optional subjects and to move in to employment or training. Very few students are not in education, training or employment after leaving the academy. Inspectors observed Year 11 students receiving good advice to complete applications for work or training from a multi-national company.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the academy. Through form groups and a personal, social and health education programme students explore cultural diversity, equality, community and British values. This supports the calm and harmonious atmosphere that exists in the academy and prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- Since the previous inspection the academy has worked successfully to engage the support and confidence of parents. 'Stay and learn' sessions in the early years and most parents attending progress evenings for older students are clear indicators of good parental links.
- Over time, the multi-academy trust sponsors have supported the academy well to ensure improvement is happening. They have checked the work of the academy and supported the Principal and other leaders in driving forward improvements. The Trust checks the performance of the academy by using the expertise of the Bradford Partnership, a local authority link. In partnership, the Trust and the local authority provide training for staff in order to improve teaching and learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The 'state of the art' school library is testament to the strong vision that governors, the sponsor and leadership have for improving learning in the academy. Governors challenge and support the Principal well in order to improve students' achievement and personal development, and the quality of teaching. They have an accurate, first-hand view of the academy. They understand fully the data about students' progress and ask searching questions to determine what needs to be done to improve standards.
 - Governors and the sponsor regularly check the academy's targets for success. They use their skills well and make checks on the academy's budget. Governors have approved how pupil premium funding is spent and know the impact of the academy's work on closing achievement gaps between those students supported by it and others. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching and understand fully the arrangements linking teachers' performance and pay. They have supported the Principal in eradicating inadequate teaching and securing improvements in middle leadership. Governors ensure that the academy's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is good. They are keen to learn, follow the instructions of their teachers and enjoy sharing their ideas to support their learning. Occasionally, when the pace of learning is not appropriate or the tasks are not challenging enough, students, particularly in Key Stage 4, can lose concentration.
- Students are very proud of their school. They wear their uniform with pride and are dressed smartly. Students welcome visitors and enjoy telling them about the things they do in school.
- Around the school, students treat each other with great respect and move sensibly and safely at all times. This leads to a very harmonious community.
- Ten minute mini-assemblies with Year 7 and tutor classes comprising all year groups ensure that all students know what is expected of them. Sixth-form students make a strong contribution to mentoring and supporting younger students as well as taking a leading role with teachers in presenting work that enhances spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- Students have a strong sense of what is right and wrong. The opportunity for two-minutes reflection or prayer each day has a very positive impact on students' spiritual and moral development. They readily give to charity and organise fundraising events to support children in Nepal to be able to access education and they support the local hostel for the homeless.
- Attendance has improved and is now average. The number of students regularly absent from school has fallen rapidly due to good leadership and strong links with parents and the community. Those very few students following alternative provision behave well. Their attendance and behaviour are checked regularly and their safety is ensured.
- The silver and green pathways, the school's alternative provision for the very few students who continue to misbehave, are highly effective. They are well managed and ensure that students modify their behaviours and quickly settle back into the main school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students are clear about what constitutes bullying. They know it is not tolerated and say that on the rare occasions it occurs it is dealt with exceptionally well by the academy staff.
- Students have a good understanding of internet safety. The school's community police officer contributes to students' understanding of how to assess risk. The school's programme for personal and social development makes a strong contribution to students' understanding of how to keep safe.
- Arrangements to support vulnerable students are good, with good links to outside agencies to support these students. The school's work to improve the attendance of these students has been highly effective. Regular checks from 'progress leaders' and senior leaders, along with the support of the school's own attendance officer have rapidly improved attendance and are also supporting improvements in academic achievement.
- All students spoken to say they feel safe in school. Parents and staff share the same, positive views about students' behaviour and safety.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good and requires improvement. Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching have prevented students achieving well enough by the end of Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Over time, teaching has inhibited students making good progress in their studies.
- Questioning is not always used skilfully, on occasions, to involve students and to recognise what they understand. It is not always used well enough to assess what an individual might know and to search out the knowledge of others and deepen their understanding.
- The marking of students' work is variable over time. Some marking does not provide succinct, useful comments to help students to improve their work. Students are not given enough opportunities to improve their work and this slows their progress. There is high-quality marking and strong response from students, especially in English, which contributes to students' good progress in this subject.
- Expectations of what students are capable of doing are not high enough. Work is not always matched to the individual needs of students. This leads to students not being challenged appropriately to ensure that those of all levels of ability make good progress, particularly the most able.

- The development of literacy and technical vocabulary are good features in most lessons. Leaders and managers are working on improving the teaching of mathematical skills in a wide range of subjects.
- Good relationships and the way praise is used to encourage and motivate pupils is a strong feature in most lessons. As a result students do what they are asked to do by teachers and other adults.
- Students use computers well to find out more about the work they are doing and to write extensively. The academy is beginning to use computer systems in lessons to develop 'in-time' assessment in the classroom for each individual student. For example, in Year 7 geography, students assessed their skills on computer systems and were then set challenging work according to their needs and abilities. As a result they all made good progress.
- Highly skilled teaching assistants make a good contribution to the development of reading for younger children and students as well as giving good support to those students with disabilities or special educational needs.
- Over time, due to the efforts of leaders and managers, teaching has improved and there is no longer any inadequate teaching within the academy.
- The quality of teaching in early years and in Key Stage 1 is good.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement, as the progress students have been making over time in mathematics, science, history and geography by the end of Key Stage 4 has not been good enough as a result of teaching that requires improvement.
- Early entry to GCSE courses in history and geography has not served students well. The academy has readjusted its curriculum and no longer uses early entry to GCSE examinations.
- From starting points that are significantly below average on entry to Key Stage 3, the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades at A* to C, including English and mathematics, has been well-below average for the past three years.
- The rate of progress in English has been improving year-on-year for the past three years and is good. Progress has improved in mathematics and science but still requires improvement.
- The few most able students in the academy are making good progress in English due to good teaching. In mathematics and science their progress requires improvement. As a result too few attain the English Baccalaureate and not enough reach the highest standards at GCSE. Recently, the academy has started to provide more support for the most able with additional staffing in mathematics. It is too early to determine the full impact of the academy's efforts to support these students.
- Vocational courses make a strong contribution to students' achievement as do those courses studied in alternative provision. Inspectors visited the school's off-site provision for Year 11 students and found that stimulating and interesting teaching captured the imagination of students and they made good progress. The academy's information shows that success in vocational information technology is outstanding.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are achieving as well as others. They have made rapid progress over the past year due to much better leadership and training for teaching staff and teaching assistants. This is a good indication of the school's commitment to equality of opportunity for all.
- Disadvantaged students are benefiting well in Key Stage 3 from the additional government funding and gaps in attainment are closing. A significant number of disadvantaged students join the academy at the start of Key Stage 4, and in 2014 gaps in attainment did not close as these new students did not benefit from the academy's good provision at Key Stage 3. The academy is well aware of this and is taking action to improve provision further at Key Stage 4.
- Those disadvantaged students at the end of Year 11 in 2014 were less than one grade behind their peers in English and just over one grade behind in mathematics. In comparison to national attainment for those not considered to be disadvantaged, they were one grade behind in English and two grades behind in mathematics.
- An analysis of students work over time shows that students in Key Stage 3 are making better progress than those in Key Stage 4, as teaching has improved in many subjects during the past three years.
- Year 7 catch-up funding (government funding for those entering secondary school with below average standards in English and mathematics) is helping students to improve their literacy skills. Students are making rapid gains in reading and good progress in writing. The school knows that more has to be done in mathematics for these students to match the gains they are making in reading.
- In Key Stage 1, inspectors found that all groups of pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They benefit well from a wide range of sporting activities supported by the

government's sports funding.

- The school's 'state of the art' library facility, the Bridge, is making an exceptional contribution to the development of reading for younger students. Inspectors were impressed by the rapid gains Key Stage 3 students have made in reading and their interest in reading widely. Students were keen to tell inspectors about how they have received, in their words, 'fabulous' help to make them read better. Key Stage 3 students are avid readers. This interest in reading is supporting them to learn well. Sixth-form students suggest new books and take opportunities to gather together in 'The Bridge' to share and develop their learning through independent tutorials. The academy is well aware that Key Stage 4 students have yet to be enthused by these most modern and up-to-date facilities.

The early years provision

is good

- The calm, purposeful environment and the interesting work, covering all of the areas of learning, help children to develop good attitudes to learning. There is a strong emphasis on developing language skills through stories, poetry, rhyme and singing.
- Children are safe and happy because of the secure procedures that exist in the early years. Adults know the needs of the children well and give them good care and attention.
- Children's behaviour makes a strong contribution to their learning. Teachers and practitioners frequently sing instructions and children join in and follow the instructions quickly. The early years setting provides a highly stimulating environment. As children settle into early years, they begin to select purposeful activities for themselves and to explore the well-equipped outdoor learning area.
- The activities children take part in promote good physical development, social skills and emotional well-being. A wide range of activities make a good contribution to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. As a result of good teaching, children's skills develop well, particularly communication and language skills.
- The majority of children enter Nursery with skills that are significantly below those typical for their age. They have particular weaknesses in understanding and speaking English as well as limited skills in making relationships and exhibiting self-confidence. Teachers and other adults quickly identify children's needs and skilfully develop activities that help children to make good progress. Those children with disabilities or special educational needs and disadvantaged children are well supported in making good progress. By the end of Reception, children are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Children enjoy listening to stories, poetry and rhyme and are making good progress in developing an understanding of how to link letters and sounds to make words.
- Leadership is good. Children's skills are assessed accurately and adults are well deployed to support all children in making good progress. Children develop the skills to work together and are respectful to each other and to adults. Due to good leadership, parents are highly engaged in their children's learning. Many have attended training sessions to learn how to help their children learn at home. Parents say they are 'delighted' with how early years is organised and in the quality of provision overall.

The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- Over time, progress has been too variable between subjects and courses. Students have made better progress in vocational courses although there has also been variability in progress between these courses. Due to teaching that requires improvement, students' achievement requires improvement. Assessment has not been accurate enough or rigorous enough to ensure that students make good progress.
- The academy has responded well to reduce variable teaching between subjects by making a number of key teaching and leadership appointments. Good leadership has assisted in improving standards in 2014 although progress still requires further improvement. Changes in leadership and improvements in teaching are beginning to show signs of improved progress. There is good capacity for further improvement.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make similar progress to others, as do disadvantaged students.
- As a result of work that challenges them, the most able students generally do well to reach the grades expected of them and some do even better.
- Sixth-form students make a very good contribution to the life of the academy. Indeed, the academy expects them to make a strong contribution. They act as positive role models and support younger students with learning through coaching and mentoring. They exhibit positive and mature attitudes and

show great respect towards each other, to other students and to adults.

- Leadership has made changes to the curriculum to challenge all students appropriately. They are highly ambitious and have challenged and supported teachers to improve in order to enable students to do better. However, it is still too early to assess these changes fully on the achievement of students.
- The academy provides strong advice and guidance for students. It enables those entering the sixth form to be placed on appropriate courses that match their abilities and aspirations. Information, advice and guidance supports students well and prepares them to go on to further and higher education or training and employment. Most students gain places at university and almost all others go on to further training or employment.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	135866
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	447777

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	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,575
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lynn Barrett
Principal	Rachel Kidd
Date of previous school inspection	12 October 2011
Telephone number	01274 770230
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