School report

Allerton High School

King Lane, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS17 7AG

Inspection dates	18–19 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	**Good**	**2**
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement is rising, with all groups of students now making good and sometimes outstanding progress across a range of subjects.
- The quality of teaching is good and improving. There are examples of outstanding teaching across the school.
- Students who use the specially resourced base for speech and language make outstanding progress.
- Students of different cultures and faiths mix extremely well and there is a real sense of community within the school.
- Students behave well in lessons and apply themselves diligently to their work. They feel safe and secure from any threats of bullying.
- The headteacher leads the school effectively and has clear plans to improve the school further.
- Leaders and managers have good plans to raise achievement and improve the quality of teaching further so that they both become outstanding.
- The governing body holds the school to account well. Its members systematically challenge school leaders on matters relating to the performance of teachers and the quality of teaching.
- An outstanding curriculum meets the needs of all students very precisely.
- The sixth form is good. The school has concentrated its efforts on improving standards and this is now beginning to have a positive effect, particularly in Year 12.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement has not yet risen to the point where it is outstanding.
- There are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school.
- Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because improvements to the sixth form, teaching and achievement are relatively recent and therefore have not been sustained over time.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 47 part lessons taught by 46 teachers. One of these lessons was jointly observed with a senior leader.
- Inspectors spoke to members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, staff and students from the school.
- A range of documents was scrutinised, including information relating to teachers' performance, safeguarding, records relating to the school's own view of teaching and the tracking of students' progress.
- Inspectors analysed the responses from 35 parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View). Additionally, inspectors received several letters from parents.

Inspection team

Robert Jones, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jonathan Woodyatt	Additional Inspector
Fiona Dixon	Additional Inspector
Stephen Rodchester	Additional Inspector
Clive Hurren	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- A below average proportion of students is eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and others.
- The proportion of students with special educational needs supported through school action is below average, but above average for those supported through school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs.
- A greater proportion of students than average speak English as an additional language and nearly half of the students are from minority ethnic groups.
- In 2012, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There is a specially resourced provision on the site which caters for students who have additional needs relating to speech, language and communication.
- The school works in collaboration with outside providers as part of the curriculum on offer for students. These are: Aspire and Achieve; Breeze Sports Academy; College of Beauty; Educ8; Elect; Elland Sports Academy; Hunslet Club; Lifeforce; Leeds City College; Leeds Reach; Leeds United Foundation and Meanwood Valley Farm.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and so raise achievement further so they become outstanding by ensuring that:
  - students receive consistently high quality feedback on their work across all subjects and that they are given the time to read and act on teachers' comments to improve their work
  - teachers are always sensitive to students' precise needs in the classroom so that they carefully reshape and adapt their lessons to get the very best out of them.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment across a range of subjects is above average by the time students reach the end of Year 11. There were significant improvements in the summer 2013 examinations compared with previous years and students made overall good and sometimes outstanding progress.
- In mathematics, standards rose sharply in 2013 as a result of improved leadership and imaginative, challenging teaching that stretched all abilities. As a result all students, including the most able, made outstanding progress.
- In English, students of all abilities, including the most able, made good progress in 2013. This was despite some instability in staffing within the English department.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Those who arrive with weak reading and writing skills make rapid gains in their learning as a result of a drive to improve reading. Some of the weakest readers make outstanding progress when supported through special courses designed to boost their reading skills.
- In turn, a strong culture of reading for pleasure has developed in the school. Consequently, over the past year, there has been a twofold increase in boys' borrowing from the school library. One boy told inspectors, 'Sometimes I get lost in my book.'
- Students are sometimes entered for examinations before the normal time, but this does not prevent them from achieving the best grade of which they are capable.
- Examination results in 2013 showed that those students who are eligible for the pupil premium made good progress in English and mathematics. In lessons, teachers know precisely who these students are and ensure they are well challenged. Consequently, they achieve well.
- The school uses funding from the pupil premium to provide additional support in the classroom and special courses to boost students' progress and reading skills. The difference in standards between those who are eligible for the pupil premium and other students is half-a-GCSE grade in both English and mathematics. This is a significant improvement from 2012, when the difference in attainment was wide in both subjects.
- Those students who are educated off site have their needs well met and achieve as well as their peers.
- Careful checks are made of students from all minority ethnic groups to ensure they achieve as well as others. Consequently, the school is highly effective in promoting equal opportunities.
- Students who speak English as an additional language make good progress as a result of the high quality support they receive to improve their command of English.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding is having a positive effect on achievement, with those students who are eligible making twice the expected progress over a one-year period in English and mathematics.
- Achievement is rising in the sixth form, which is apparent from the much improved results for Year 12 in 2013. This showed that a greater proportion of students are meeting their challenging targets and, in particular, reaching the higher grades of A* to B.
- Students in the specially resourced base for speech, language and communication make outstanding progress. Many arrive with exceptionally weak skills but leave with an impressive range of qualifications that prepares them very well for the next stage in their education or training.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers plan their lessons well, ensuring that all abilities are well challenged. They provide helpful, annotated seating plans that outline very specifically what each student needs to do to achieve their potential. As a result, adults working in classrooms know how to support students of all abilities and backgrounds to achieve well.

- Teaching assistants give high quality support to students of all abilities as a result of the good systems they have to work collaboratively with each other and with the teachers.
- In all subjects, there are many opportunities for students to work independently and in small groups. Consequently, students are able to discuss issues with each other and solve problems. This helps students to develop their thinking and reasoning skills and for those who speak English as an additional language, it develops their language skills well.
- Teachers question students well and insist that students answer in full sentences. Any weak answers to questions are challenged further by the teacher so that students have to think more deeply.
- In one inspirational psychology lesson, sixth-form students confidently gave presentations to demonstrate their learning about the topic of cognition. Students routinely used subject-specific terminology and the teacher skilfully identified and clarified common misconceptions to enable learning to progress quickly.
- Where teaching requires improvement, teachers do not promptly detect that students require additional support or are not quite ready for the next step in learning. For example, some teachers ask students searching questions, but do not pick up on any misunderstandings which are evident in their answers.
- Teaching is improving rapidly in the sixth form. Together with the much improved guidance that students receive on courses that they can study, this is leading to higher standards in the sixth form.
- There are examples of high-quality feedback, notably in design and technology. However, overall the quality of feedback that students receive varies across the school. Sometimes, incisive comments are made by teachers, but the effectiveness of these comments is limited owing to the lack of opportunity for students to read and respond to this feedback to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- A significant feature of the school is how well students of different backgrounds relate to each other. There is an impressive level of tolerance and mutual respect among all staff and students.
- Behaviour in classrooms is good and sometimes outstanding. Students are quick to respond to teachers' requests and they demonstrate good social skills when working in groups to solve problems without the help of the teacher.
- Students' attitudes to learning are good in most lessons because teachers inspire and motivate them. Only occasionally, when teaching does not inspire or motivate them, do students lose concentration.
- Around the school, at lunchtimes and break times, students behave well when not closely supervised.
- Students say they feel safe and secure. They say that bullying is rare but when it does happen, there is always a caring adult to turn to.
- Students have a good understanding of the different kinds of bullying and a growing understanding of possible dangers associated with the internet and mobile phones.
- Students whose circumstances potentially make them vulnerable are exceptionally well looked after by the school, with special rooms for them to go to if they feel they need a safe haven.
- Sixth-form students act as good role models in the school. Most take part in a programme of support or voluntary work as part of their curriculum diet.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has developed the skills of middle and senior leaders well so that they make high quality checks on the quality of teaching and students' achievement.
- The tracking of students' progress has been improved, which has resulted in raising achievement

for all groups of students, but particularly those who are eligible for the pupil premium.

- Outcomes for students in the sixth form are showing strong signs of improvement, owing to improved teaching and a range of courses that is suitable for all tastes and abilities.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural needs of students are well met, for example through considering the challenges of the black population of New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and discussing the moral dilemmas associated with deforestation.
- The checks made on the quality of teaching are accurate and of high quality. The inspection team's view of teaching across the school matched closely that of school leaders. Moreover, good plans are in place to improve teaching further so that a greater proportion is at least good.
- An outstanding curriculum is in place that precisely meets the needs of all students. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs receive high quality support. Weak readers have their needs well met and a wide menu of options is available in Key Stage 4. Students are well prepared for study at A level and receive excellent advice and guidance on courses they can study at all stages.
- The quality of independent advice for all year groups is of high quality. This enables all students to make good choices for the next stage in their education.
- The local authority gives good support to the school. In particular, it has given excellent advice and support to enable the school to develop its use of assessment information in order to improve teaching and measure the progress of different groups of students.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body gives good quality support and challenges school leaders to improve the school further. Its members are kept well informed about students' achievement and the quality of teaching. This enables its members to ask searching questions so that senior leaders can speed up the rate of improvements. The governing body keeps a close watch on the progress made by pupils eligible for the pupil premium and has been instrumental in securing the success of these students in the 2013 examinations. Through one of its committees, the governing body closely monitors the performance of teachers and how pay is related to the quality of their teaching and the achievement of their pupils.

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	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. 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.

School details

Unique reference number	108057
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	425964

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,148
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Kettle
Headteacher	Elaine Silson
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2008
Telephone number	0113 3368484
Fax number	0113 3930631
Email address	info@allertonhigh.org.uk

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