Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Allerton High School

King Lane, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS17 7AG

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 November 2024

Outcome

Allerton High School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils achieve astonishingly well at this exceptional school. The school is inclusive and celebrates the diversity of its pupils through activities such as 'culture day'. This helps pupils from all backgrounds feel a sense of belonging. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are happy here.

The school has exceptionally high expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, achieve excellent outcomes in national tests across all subjects at both key stage 4 and key stage 5. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education. They are aspirational and positive about their future.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary across the school. Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Pupils engage enthusiastically in their learning. Teachers recognise positive behaviour by awarding 'achievement points' to pupils in line with the school's values of hard work, kindness, perseverance, aspiration, service to others, courtesy, honesty and tolerance.

Pupils and students in the sixth form have access to a range of different leadership roles. These roles have a meaningful impact on the life of the school. The Year 13 'Principal Students', for example, mentor Year 12 students and read with younger pupils. The junior leadership team contributes to policy decisions across the school.

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

The school has developed a broad curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. The key to the success of the curriculum is consistent implementation by staff. Teachers are experts in their subjects. They ask targeted questions that deepen pupils' understanding. Teachers circulate the classroom to check learning and correct any misunderstandings. In every lesson, there is a sharp focus on the technical vocabulary that pupils need to know. This approach helps pupils build a strong understanding across the curriculum.

Reading is a priority. The school identifies effectively the weakest readers and helps them to catch up with their peers. The school promotes a love of reading. In key stage 3, pupils read at the start of every English lesson. They have library lessons, where teachers help pupils to choose books that match their interests and ability level.

Since the previous inspection, the school has worked hard to narrow the gap in attainment in sixth-form subjects. Classroom expectations are in line with the rest of school. Teachers support students to become independent learners. As a result, students achieve exceptionally well in all subjects. Sixth-form provision is a strength of the school.

The school identifies and expertly supports pupils with SEND. Staff know the pupils extremely well. Teachers adapt their lessons effectively to ensure that pupils with SEND can not only access the learning but can thrive in the classroom. For example, pupils who struggle with language and communication have help to structure their responses to questions. As a result of this support, pupils with SEND achieve extraordinary outcomes.

The pastoral support provided by the school is first rate. The school leaves no pupil behind. There is a tiered approach to mental health support. This includes access to coaches, counsellors and the 'thrive' room. Through this approach, pupils who need extra help successfully access their learning.

Staff work diligently to improve attendance. The school applies an effective strategy to identify and support pupils and families who are struggling with their attendance. This includes the use of one-to-one mentoring and a rewards system. As a result, pupils attend school regularly and attendance continues to improve.

Pupils receive structured careers advice from key stage 3 to the end of sixth form. As a result, pupils know the range of options available to them. They make informed choices about their future. Pupils learn how to stay safe online and in the community. They know about different types of relationships and understand consent. Pupils have access to an array of extra-curricular activities including sports, music and the arts. Pupils take part in a range of local, national and international trips and visits, which supplement the curriculum. For example, they visit Boggle Hole in science and the Sheffield Institute of Sport in physical education.

Staff and leaders at all levels are passionate about the school and its pupils. Governors have a clear understanding of their role and know how to carry out their duties. They know the school well and play an active role in setting the strategic direction.

The school offers strong support for teachers in the early years of their careers. Leaders are mindful of workload and regularly consult staff on the issue. Staff are proud to work at the school. School leaders have worked tirelessly to improve the school since the previous inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 outstanding 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 outstanding for overall effectiveness in December 2018.

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	108057
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10346223
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,702
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	351
Appropriate authority	The Local Authority
Chair of governing body	Janet Illingworth
Headteacher	Elaine Silson
Website	www.allertonhigh.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 December 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses two registered alternative provisions and one unregistered provision.
- 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the local governing body (LGB) and two other members of the LGB.
- 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' interest first.
- Inspectors spoke with several groups of pupils and observed their behaviour at social times.
- Inspectors met with groups of staff and also considered the opinions expressed through the staff survey.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents expressed through Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Chris Sergeant, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Richard Wood	Ofsted Inspector
Tricia Stevens	Ofsted Inspector

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