

Inspection of a good school: Honley High School

Station Road, Honley, Holmfirth, West Yorkshire HD9 6QJ

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 December 2023

Outcome

Honley High School continues to be a good school.

The interim headteacher of this school is Liz Lord. This school is part of Together 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), David Lord, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jan Wallis.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders ensure that all pupils can flourish at Honley High School. They provide pupils with a high-quality education in a learning environment where pupils' achievements are regularly recognised and praised. Pupils are taught effectively and they work hard in lessons. As a result, they achieve well.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils. They have built a culture where pupils demonstrate a positive attitude to school and behave extremely well. Pupils are friendly, courteous and welcoming to visitors. The school is calm and orderly. Pupils enjoy warm relationships with staff. Staff know their pupils well. Staff work closely together and support pupils to ensure that their needs are met; this includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There is a strong sense of community at the school. As a result, pupils who access the additionally resourced provision integrate well with their peers. Pupils are safe in school.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of enrichment experiences. Many pupils attend clubs that develop their knowledge and interests in a range of areas, including sign language, cinema, reading and creative writing. Pupils are also offered the opportunity to take part in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme as well as the school's Combined Cadet Force. Such involvement helps pupils to build their teamwork skills and develop a sense of responsibility. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills. For example, pupils can become ambassadors, head students or members of the school council.

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

The school has developed an ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including pupils with SEND. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum develops pupils' knowledge over time. For example, in Year 7 science, pupils are introduced to the concept of energy. By the time pupils reach Year 9, they use this knowledge of energy to learn about it in the context of chemical reactions. In some subjects, there are aspects of the curriculum that are being refined and are not fully embedded. For example, in science, leaders are in the process of mapping out with greater precision how pupils will develop their practical knowledge and skills over time. In English, the key stage 4 curriculum is being refined to clarify what knowledge pupils should acquire and when in order to further deepen pupils' understanding.

Teachers consistently demonstrate strong subject knowledge. They use this skilfully to present information clearly to pupils and to identify any misconceptions pupils might have. Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding and then plan any support or interventions that pupils might need. The school's 'active learning cycle' is embedded and used consistently well. For example, pupils regularly complete 'echo' tasks to recall core knowledge from previous lessons. This is helping pupils to remember more of the curriculum. Pupils are often given the opportunity in lessons to embed and apply their knowledge. The school ensures that appropriate support is implemented for pupils with SEND. All pupils, including pupils with SEND, are prepared well for the next stage of their education and they move on to well-suited destinations. Pupils who access the additionally resourced provision are supported very well by specialist teachers.

Staff are quick to identify pupils who may struggle to read. Pupils at the early stages of learning to read follow an appropriate phonics programme. It is delivered by trained staff. Younger pupils develop their reading fluency and comprehension when they read aloud to older pupils who take the role of reading leaders. The school's recent work on prioritising the teaching of vocabulary is well embedded. This is helping to support pupils' reading and literacy in the curriculum.

Pupils behave extremely well in lessons and around school during social times. Pupils enjoy being named as 'star performer' in lessons. They also appreciate the positive recognition they receive in lessons. Low-level disruption in lessons is rare. Leaders have prioritised ensuring pupils attend school regularly. For most pupils, leaders' interventions to support attendance are having a positive impact.

The school has developed a comprehensive personal development programme. In 'iGen' lessons, pupils learn about a range of issues, such as justice, democracy, tolerance and personal safety, through reading carefully chosen fiction and non-fiction books. Leaders assess and monitor pupils' understanding of the topics they learn about. The school has links with many external agencies to provide pupils with further support. Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities and trips. Leaders monitor that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, are accessing wider opportunities. Pupils receive high-quality careers advice. A range of speakers visit the school to discuss careers, further and higher education and training opportunities.

Leaders, including governors and trustees, have a shared vision to ensure that pupils receive a high-quality education. Leaders support staff with their well-being and workload. Staff are proud to work at the school. Governors and trustees provide appropriate challenge and strong support for leaders. The trust promotes a culture of collaboration. This is helping the school to continue to grow and develop.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, elements of the curriculum are under development following a period of review. This means that the knowledge pupils should acquire in these areas is not fully identified and embedded into the curriculum. The school should further enhance the curriculum, and its implementation in the classroom, to enable pupils to develop and demonstrate deep understanding across all subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 predecessor school, Honley High School, to be good in October 2015.

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	146906
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10297460
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,288
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jan Wallis
CEO of the trust	David Lord
Headteacher	Liz Lord (Interim Headteacher)
Website	www.honleyhigh.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of Together Learning Trust.
- The current interim headteacher has been in post since September 2023.
- A small number of pupils access alternative provision. The school uses three registered alternative providers.
- The school has an additionally resourced provision on site. It caters for complex communication and interaction needs.
- 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 judgement 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 CEO of the trust, the interim headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, members of the executive team from the trust and a range of staff. They also met with members of the local governing body and board of trustees.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, science, art and design and modern languages. For each deep dive, inspectors spoke to subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, had discussions with pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator. Inspectors visited lessons and considered how the needs of pupils with SEND were addressed. An inspector visited the additionally resourced provision.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for reading, personal development, careers and behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors observed pupils at various times of the school day.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including minutes from the local governing body meetings and the school's self-evaluation and development plan.
- Inspectors scrutinised evidence relating to attendance and records of pupils who have joined or left the school. Inspectors scrutinised examination entries.
- 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 around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors considered the survey responses from parents, pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Dan McKeating, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Matthew Vellensworth

His Majesty's Inspector

Joe Barton

Ofsted Inspector

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