

# Dixons Allerton Academy

Rhodesway, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD8 0DH

## Inspection dates

10–11 November 2016

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Require improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
16 to 19 study programmes	<b>Require improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders in the secondary phase have not secured consistently good teaching. Too many pupils do not know what they need to do to improve. Teaching is consistently good in the primary phase.
- Leaders and teachers in the secondary phase do not use assessment information well enough. They do not check that different groups of pupils are making enough progress. This prevents them from intervening quickly and bringing about rapid improvement.
- Outcomes at the end of key stage 4 are below average. Disadvantaged pupils do not make the progress they should. There are particular issues in science.
- Governors have not monitored the impact of funding that is specifically targeted to support different groups of pupils. They do not know if it has been well spent.
- Work given to the most able pupils is too easy. There are too few opportunities for them to think deeply and enjoy challenging activities. As a result, too many underachieve.
- Students in the sixth form do not achieve as well as they should when studying academic courses. Assessment of academic work is inaccurate and this hinders students' progress.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils have positive attitudes to school and behave well. They are welcoming, polite and courteous. They are proud of their school, dress smartly and arrive at lessons ready to learn.
- Children in the early years make good progress and delight in exploring their environment. This imaginative and creative provision stimulates children's curiosity and develops a real joy in learning.
- The curriculum now provides a rich and varied range of learning opportunities. There is a good choice of after-school clubs and activities.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They know how to keep themselves safe online and when using mobile technology. They report that if bullying occurs, it is dealt with swiftly.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management rapidly by:
  - ensuring that governors understand and execute their statutory responsibilities and hold leaders to account for their actions
  - using pupil premium funding effectively for the direct benefit of disadvantaged pupils and carefully evaluating its impact on their learning and progress
  - implementing the necessary, urgent changes to address long-standing issues in science
  - sharpening and streamlining systems for school improvement, including the careful use of assessment information to check the progress of different groups of pupils
  - clarifying leaders' responsibilities, so that they are fully accountable for their work.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment, and outcomes, by ensuring that:
  - teaching is tailored to meet the needs of pupils, including the most able, so that pupils are challenged, deepen their learning and make good progress
  - there is greater consistency in the feedback pupils receive in accordance with the school's assessment policy, so that they know how to improve in their learning
  - teachers' assessments are accurate and reliable.

An external review of governance and an external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The principal, together with the heads of both the secondary and primary phases, is passionate about raising the achievement of all pupils in the school and bringing about sustainable and lasting change. However, they have an overly optimistic view of the strength of leadership in the school. Some leaders and managers need greater clarity regarding their own roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability.
- School leaders in the secondary phase do not make effective use of information about pupils' progress. Consequently, individuals and groups of pupils whose progress is poor are not identified quickly and appropriate actions are not taken. Quite the opposite is true in the primary phase.
- Leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching focuses too much on systems and compliance, rather than on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress. This limits how effectively leaders are able to help teachers to improve. Even so, teachers do have rich opportunities for professional development and the impact of this training is clearly seen through an improving quality of teaching in the classroom.
- Teachers who are new to the profession develop their skills quickly because they receive high-quality training and support.
- The impact of pupil premium funding on the learning of disadvantaged pupils in the secondary phase is not good enough and is not monitored closely enough by leaders. Substantial differences remain between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils compared to other pupils nationally.
- Pupil premium funding is used to good effect in key stage 1 where, for the most part, it is spent on additional staffing. This ensures that pupils receive carefully planned, targeted teaching in small groups which improves identified areas of weakness.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is used well to improve the reading ages of those who enter key stage 3 below expected standards. Last year it was not used well to improve pupils' numeracy skills.
- Funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well used by the school. It enables all pupils with an education, health and care plan to be a part of a nurture group where they receive additional support. It is also used appropriately to provide additional specialist teaching support which has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- The primary curriculum is dynamic and evolving successfully as the school grows. Teachers are implementing a new mathematics curriculum based on a model of teaching taken from the Far East. Their aim is to significantly improve pupils' understanding of concepts and their ability to think and reason mathematically for themselves. Additional sports funding is used well to buy additional equipment to improve gross motor skills and provide specialist coaching.
- Leaders have now ensured that the curriculum at key stage 3 and 4 meets pupils' needs and is both broad and balanced. All pupils will now complete examinations at the end of key stage 4.
- Pupils in both the secondary and primary phases say they enjoy the many and varied opportunities for enrichment. There is a wealth of after-school clubs including sports,

music and performing arts, as well as intervention and support activities.

- Strong development of fundamental British values and the effective promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpin the ethos of the school. Inspectors observed pupils in Year 10 expressing their opinions confidently and taking part in a lively discussion on the topic of democratic principles. Excited Year 3 pupils and their teachers were seen dressed in Victorian costumes prior to visiting the old spinning mills of Bradford and exploring local culture and history.
- Leaders have developed a culture of high aspirations among pupils. Leaders know they must now ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment meets all pupils' needs so that they can succeed.
- The sponsor has provided effective support to the principal, who took up the post at Easter 2016. Help in resolving problems in science since the last inspection has been slow and problematic due to difficulties in recruitment.
- The principal's plans for improvement are innovative and ambitious. Implementation is underway, but it is too soon to see significant impact.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors have not been rigorous enough in holding leaders to account because they have relied too heavily on information given to them by leaders, some of which has been inaccurate and overly positive.
- Governors have not been appropriately involved in the school's systems to manage the performance of teachers, although the chair of governors has been involved in appraisal of the principal.
- Governors have not monitored the impact of the targeted pupil premium funding effectively; nor have they questioned why disadvantaged pupils do not make strong enough progress.
- Governors fully support the school's ethos and know the school well. They understand the challenges that leaders face in raising aspirations and fully support leaders in their drive to improve standards.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that all staff are fully trained and receive regular safeguarding updates.
- Staff know how to report concerns they may have about a pupil's safety. Procedures to identify and follow up any concerns are thorough. Leaders follow up concerns quickly, involving outside agencies, the local authority and parents appropriately.
- The school's safer recruitment and vetting procedures of staff and governors meet current requirements. There is a culture of safety in this school.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving, but there are some inconsistencies across key stages and subjects, especially in science.
- In science across the secondary phase, teachers have not responded to training or direction from leaders. The quality of explanations and learning activities is poor and so progress is limited. Many pupils work hard and study carefully on their own. This demonstrates their resilience and determination. Teachers do not check their work, so

pupils' progress is hindered because misconceptions are not addressed.

- The quality of assessment of pupils' written work is variable in the secondary phase. Assessment varies between subjects and within subjects. Differences relate to the quantity and quality of marking, what is assessed and how frequently. Expectations of how pupils should respond to marking vary considerably from one teacher to another. Assessment information held by the school is not used well to inform planning or to tailor teaching more closely to the needs of pupils.
- Assessment is significantly stronger in the primary phase, guided by a clear policy. Teachers use assessment information as a matter of course to inform their planning. They have a good understanding of pupils' misconceptions and barriers to learning, which enables them to intervene, unravel the problems and help pupils to move on.
- Teachers throughout the school do not always have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. This is especially the case for the most able pupils. At times, they were seen waiting patiently for others in lessons, when they could easily have moved on to more difficult and interesting work.
- In English, mathematics and the wider curriculum, the impact of the school's work to improve teaching is clear to see. Teachers use time productively and many pupils learn effectively. Tasks are clear and well explained. Pupils value and are interested in their learning. Teachers use questioning to good effect to probe and extend learning. They insist that pupils think carefully and give them time to work things out for themselves. Pupils are keen to participate. Teachers are quick to identify any pupil who is struggling and falling behind, intervening quickly to help them catch up.
- Teachers take care to ensure that pupils gain a strong understanding of mathematical concepts. They provide opportunities for pupils to practise methods and, increasingly, require pupils to reason for themselves. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to tackle interesting, open-ended and more challenging problems.
- The systematic teaching of phonics knowledge and skills in the primary phase is strong. Pupils in key stage 1 enjoy reading. The phonics skills of the most able readers are well developed and assessment of their progress is accurate. They read with confidence and meaning, using strategies well to tackle complex vocabulary. The weakest readers use phonics to sound out simple words, but struggle with understanding the meaning of what they have read. The school provides reading opportunities every day, so that all pupils develop the strong reading skills needed for study in key stage 2.
- Good relationships are evident everywhere in the school. Praise is a strong feature of teaching and is used well to encourage and motivate pupils. Pupils respond quickly to directions from teachers and other adults.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes to learning in almost every lesson seen was a striking feature of the inspection. Pupils want to learn and understand the importance of learning. They take a real pride in their work and most books are neat and tidy.

- When comparing the school now to the past, Year 11 pupils made an important comparison. They explained that in the past 'It was all about changing the ethos and behaviour of pupils so that we all got on', but 'now, it's all about learning and our future'. It was clear they had aspirations and ambitions to fulfil.
- Great respect is shown by pupils for each other and for the values that underpin modern Britain. This begins from the earliest age. One inspector witnessed two very young pupils talking when the 'Last Post' bugle played across the school on Remembrance Day. One child carried on talking, absorbed in a learning activity. The other child gently caught the arm of the first and whispered, 'Respect', and both fell silent. The harmonious relationships seen across the whole school are founded on mutual respect and a deep understanding of both difference and community.
- All pupils in both phases value the range of sports available. They are taught how to eat healthily and keep physically fit. The school is attentive to pupils' emotional well-being and pupils value the support they have from staff in the school.
- Pupils said that while bullying has not been eradicated, it is dealt with firmly when reported. Pupils are aware of the many forms of bullying, including cyber bullying and homophobic bullying. They know what they need to do to keep themselves safe.
- The school is vigilant in checking that the very small number of pupils in alternative provision are safe. A senior member of staff visits the provisions each half term to check the progress of their pupils.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is an orderly environment. Pupils in the secondary phase move in silence from one lesson to another. They arrive promptly to their next lesson, focused and ready to learn. In the primary phase, movement about the school is managed very effectively, so that a calm atmosphere pervades the building.
- There is little disruption in lessons, although when the pace of learning slows, some pupils do become distracted and fidget. The school has effective systems for managing behaviour and has worked hard to ensure that pupils understand their responsibilities and the need to make the right choices.
- Pupils' attendance is good and improving. In 2015, the percentage of pupils who were absent was above average. This has improved steadily so that now far fewer pupils than in the past are hampered by low attendance, including those who are disadvantaged. These changes are the result of the actions of a highly proactive and vigilant attendance team. They are also due to significant changes in pupils' attitudes to learning and their view of education. The team also monitor carefully the attendance of pupils in alternative provision.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Require improvement

- The outcomes for pupils require improvement because of the significant variability in pupils' progress between subjects in the secondary phase.
- Progress in science, a core subject, was a key weakness at the last inspection and remains so. This weakness was seen during observations, in pupils' work and in examination results. Despite leaders' efforts since the last inspection, they have been unsuccessful in driving improvement effectively.

- Current assessment information about pupils' achievements is difficult to use with confidence, as new systems are not yet embedded. However, pupils' learning, as seen in a very wide range of pupils' work, confirms that pupils are making better progress than previously. This indicates that the actions taken by senior leaders to improve pupils' outcomes are having a positive impact.
- Pupils who enter the school in Year 7 and need to catch up in literacy and/or numeracy improve their reading skills during the year. Most read at or beyond age-related expectations by the end of the year. Improvements in numeracy are being addressed this year through morning 'mastery' lessons, although it is too soon to see the impact of this work.
- A very small number of pupils study in alternative provision. The school monitors individual pupils' progress carefully. Numbers are too low to form part of this report.
- Provisional data shows progress made by Year 11 pupils in 2016 in English and mathematics has improved. The proportion of pupils who reached a good standard in both English and mathematics in their GCSE examinations rose by 5% to 42% in 2016.
- Provisional data shows the progress made by disadvantaged pupils who had been at the school for the whole of key stage 4 was lower than that of other pupils nationally. A significant number of pupils who joined the school part-way through key stage 4 made strong progress during this time although, overall, their progress was well below that of their peers.
- The Year 11 pupils in 2016 were the last cohort who had been part of a curriculum strategy that involved taking GCSEs early, each in a single year. Leaders worked hard to overcome the difficulties this created during the year, with some success.
- Too few of the most able pupils in all key stages make the progress expected of them. This is evident in pupils' work and also in test and examination results. It is because the work they are given is not challenging enough.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least expected progress from their starting points as a result of teachers' careful planning.
- A small number of pupils in Year 7 benefit from learning within a 'nurture group' with a dedicated teacher. Their wider social skills are developing well. They are excited by their learning and were very excited when talking about it to inspectors. In key stage 1 and 2, support is highly targeted, well planned and informed by accurate assessment. More than half of the pupils reached the expected standards at the end of key stage 1 in 2016 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils in the secondary phase are now doing better than previously. This is because they are benefiting from improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, morning 'mastery' sessions and intervention classes.
- Overall, pupils made good progress in phonics in Year 1 and 80% of pupils reached the expected standard in 2016. Teacher assessments at the end of key stage 1 showed that the proportion who reached the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics was below average. Progress measured from the foundation stage was also below average. These were the school's first results. Leaders have acted quickly to identify weaknesses in learning as pupils have moved into key stage 2.
- In the primary phase, pupil premium funding is targeted carefully to provide additional support. The progress of disadvantaged pupils in the phonics screening tests has improved since last year, although it is still below average. Most of those who did not meet the required standard in 2015 caught up quickly in Year 2. By the end of key



stage 1, disadvantaged pupils reached national standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

- The progress pupils are making currently in the primary phase is good, especially in reading and writing. Progress is currently a little slower in mathematics due to the implementation of a very different approach to teaching and learning.
- There is a tangible enthusiasm for reading across the whole school. Secondary pupils benefit from an impressive library facility known as 'The Bridge'. Pupils have a wealth of resources available to them on a range of media.
- Careers education is strong and begins early in Year 8. By the time pupils reach the end of key stage 4, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- Leaders of the early years ensure that children get off to a flying start. They have high expectations for children's academic and personal development and know that every moment counts. Consequently, children achieve well and are prepared successfully for their next steps. Leaders are acutely aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and know exactly what needs to be done to improve further.
- Leaders pay close attention to the training needs of their staff, a high proportion of whom are new to the profession. They monitor the quality of teaching carefully and its impact on learning, so that training and support is just what is needed and provided at the right time.
- Leaders check the progress of individuals and groups of children regularly, so that they can help quickly if problems arise. For example, they recognised last year that the progress of girls was too slow and made the required changes. This year, girls' progress has improved rapidly in every area of learning.
- Many children begin Nursery with communication, language and number skills that are well below those typical for their age, and many have complex learning needs. Good-quality teaching and a vibrant learning environment ensure that children thrive during their time in Nursery. By the end of Reception, children make consistently good progress from their starting points.
- Skilled teaching and effective modelling by staff enables children to make rapid improvements. For example, children practise their speaking and listening skills when singing along with their teachers. Children have many opportunities to practise their number skills in their exploration and play.
- Children thrive in this safe, secure and happy environment. They are taught to respect and care for one another. As a result, children share resources, help each other out and work together purposefully.
- Teachers provide a stimulating and imaginative curriculum and use the school's wealth of outdoor facilities well, in order to enrich pupils' learning. On a very cold, rainy and bleak day, inspectors saw the youngest children preparing to go outdoors to wash the headteacher's green car. The weather had no effect on their excitement and enthusiasm for the task ahead. Many rich areas of learning were developed from the task, beginning with children developing their independence as they dressed themselves in their waterproof trousers and jackets.



- Relationships with parents are particularly strong because of the regular opportunities they have to contribute to their children's learning. Parents and children benefit from 'stay and play' sessions, workshops and family lunchtimes.
- Teachers plan learning carefully for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, they make good progress. Effective use is also made of pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils. However, the level of challenge for the most able children is not high enough and, as a result, too few exceed the expected standards at the end of Reception.
- There are many opportunities for assessment as a result of the imaginative and well-planned curriculum. However, assessments are not always captured in staff observations of children or records of children's achievements. Consequently, some opportunities are lost that could have helped staff to identify needs and accelerate learning further.

### 16 to 19 study programmes

### Require improvement

- There are wide differences in outcomes between different subjects. Students make significantly better progress from their starting points when studying vocational pathways compared to academic pathways, especially when including science. As a result, outcomes in the sixth form require improvement.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable, relating directly to the variability in student outcomes. Where teachers' expectations are high, learning proceeds at a brisk pace for all groups of students. Teachers' questioning identifies misconceptions quickly and they use their secure subject knowledge effectively to deepen learning. Assessment of their work helps the students to know exactly what they need to do to improve.
- Questioning by teachers is superficial where teachers provide less challenge, and teachers do not assess learning. Students' misconceptions are not identified; they do not know how to improve and their progress is held back. This was seen in science where students' understanding of how different elements of science are interconnected was seriously limited, as was their development as scientists.
- Too often, teachers are not accurate enough in assessing the grade at which a student is working. Grades awarded are too generous. As a result, teachers do not take effective action to bring about improvements and enable students to reach higher grades.
- Leaders at all levels have yet to bring about decisive improvements over time. They are beginning to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. However, monitoring is currently only focused on compliance with school systems. Some monitoring is inaccurate.
- Students' attitudes to learning show a great deal of maturity and they want to do the very best they can. They show a good deal of resilience and independence in their learning.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad and flexible. Most students follow a mixed programme of academic and vocational study. Participation in work experience is encouraged, although not always directly relevant to students' career aspirations.
- Students appreciate the range of opportunities for personal development that are available. These include participation in Young Enterprise activities, the Duke of

Edinburgh's Award scheme and the National Citizenship Service.

- A number of students begin their study programmes having not attained good GCSE grades in English or mathematics. Overall, the proportion who make good progress and improve their grades by the end of their study programme is higher than average.
- Students greatly value the individual support offered by their teachers and also the wide range of learning resources available to them. They are very proud of their school and how it has moved forwards. They say that behaviour is good and has greatly improved. Bullying is very rare and they feel safe in the school.
- Most students stay in the sixth form for two years and complete their study programmes. There are many opportunities for students to explore possible career paths and they are well supported in preparing for their futures. In almost all cases, students progress to their first choice in higher education, training or employment.

## School details

Unique reference number	135866
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	10019750

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 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,705
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	232
Appropriate authority	The academy trust
Chair	Lynn Barrett
Principal	Gary Dreher
Telephone number	01274 770 230
Website	<a href="http://www.dixonsaa.com">http://www.dixonsaa.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@dixonsaa.com">admin@dixonsaa.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	12–13 November 2014

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Dixons Allerton Academy is an 'all through' academy and a member of the Dixons Academies Charitable Trust.
- The school is significantly larger than the average secondary school.
- The school currently educates pupils aged three to eight years and 11 to 19 years. The school has catered for pupils in key stages 3, 4, and 5 since it opened in September

2009. The primary academy opened in September 2013 to children in the early years. Key stage 1 pupils have attended since September 2014 and key stage 2 pupils have attended since September 2016.

- Children in the early years attend Nursery classes on a part-time basis and the Reception classes on a full-time basis.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average.
- Most pupils are from Asian backgrounds and a small proportion are White British. The majority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average.
- A very small number of pupils attend alternative provision at Bradford College and Tracks education.
- The academy met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 4, in 2015.
- The leadership of the school comprises the principal of the academy and an overarching head of the secondary phase and a head of the primary phase.
- The principal took up post in April 2016.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across a wide range of lessons and learning activities, including whole year group 'mastery' lessons. Many of these activities were conducted jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Pupils' written work was examined carefully during lessons and discussed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors observed behaviour between lessons, during break and lunchtimes in both the primary and secondary academy.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils both formally and informally and listened to pupils read.
- Thirty-nine parental responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, 'Parent View' were considered. Online questionnaire returns from 118 pupils and 54 members of staff were also taken into account.
- Inspectors held meetings with the academy principal, the head of the secondary phase and the head of the primary phase, senior leaders, middle leaders and also teachers who have qualified recently.
- Inspectors met with the chair of the governing body, the vice-chair and two members of the governing body.
- A meeting was held with the chief executive officer of Dixons Academies Charitable Trust and the principal of another academy in the trust.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's own evaluation of how well it is doing, plans for development, performance management documents, information about the work of the governing body, records of the monitoring of teaching and data relating to pupils' achievement. Safeguarding and child protection documentation, attendance data and records relating to behaviour were also examined.

## Inspection team

Janice Gorch, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Graham Crerar	Ofsted Inspector
Sai Patel	Ofsted Inspector
Beverly Clubley	Ofsted Inspector
Cathy Morgan	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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