

# Inspection of The Skipton Academy

Gargrave Road, Skipton, North Yorkshire BD23 1UQ

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Inspection dates: 25 and 26 January 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Requires Improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The Skipton Academy has improved significantly over the last few years. It is now a good school. Leaders have raised ambitions for what pupils can achieve. Pupils talk about their personal ambitions for further study and work. They know the qualifications they need to achieve them. Pupils, including those with additional needs, are now making strong progress in most subjects.

Behaviour in lessons, and around the school, is calm. Pupils are keen to do well. When pupils' behaviour falls short of expectations, adults remind them to do better and behaviour quickly improves. Bullying is rare. If it does occur, pupils report it and it is dealt with quickly and effectively. Adults routinely check in with pupils involved in bullying to confirm that the issues have been resolved.

The reputation of the school within the local community has improved significantly. Pupil numbers are increasing rapidly. Many pupils have joined the school mid-year during the last few years. These pupils receive very high-quality support to help them quickly feel that they belong and are fully part of the school community. The significant increase in pupils attending the school has allowed the range of qualifications and extra-curricular opportunities offered to pupils to grow.

Pupils are proud to say they attend The Skipton Academy. Parents and carers would overwhelmingly recommend the school to other parents.

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

Leaders have worked closely with colleagues from within Moorlands Learning Trust to improve the school. Support initially focused on the core subjects of mathematics, English and science. Strong curriculums have supported new and established teachers by clearly stating what pupils should already know, how to check that this knowledge is secure, and what pupils need to learn within each new unit. As the school has grown, leaders have been able to reduce the number of temporary teachers and appoint permanent teachers.

In other subjects, curriculum development has been more recent. In all subjects, what pupils will learn, and when, has been planned. However, older pupils in school have studied a combination of 'old' (less rigorous) and 'new' (more rigorous) curriculums in some subjects. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their learning from previous years. These gaps are not always recognised and addressed by teachers.

Reading is prioritised within the school. Pupils read daily with their form tutors. Pupils at an early stage of learning to read are carefully assessed, and receive swift and appropriate support. Their reading develops quickly.

From historically low starting points when pupils start the school in Year 7, pupils make strong progress and achieve well by the end of Year 11. Furthermore, pupils

with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including those in the additional resourced provision (The Lookout), are expertly supported to achieve well. Individual support plans are carefully tailored to the specific needs of each pupil, including appropriate adjustments to support them to learn new curriculum content. Adults use these plans carefully and provide the precise support that pupils need to allow them to achieve well.

Staff in school are extremely supportive of school leaders, frequently talking about how the school has been 'transformed' over the last few years.

Leaders place a high priority on pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about important issues, including careers, keeping safe, different faiths and democracy. Pupils have strong knowledge of the topics they have studied. However, leaders have not yet developed clear plans for how they will evaluate the effectiveness of the new personal development curriculum.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular trips and clubs. Pupils' attendance at clubs is not as high as leaders want. They have recently introduced a 'loyalty card' to encourage more pupils to attend regularly.

Trustees know the school very well. They have secure systems for gathering information about the effectiveness of provision, particularly with regard to the quality of education and safeguarding. Trustees work effectively with the advisory board.

Leaders, including trustees, have identified the challenges that the school faces as it grows quickly in size, including how to gain consistency of teaching quality as subject departments grow from being single teacher departments. They have identified the systems and processes, such as for staff reporting safeguarding concerns, that will need to change as the school continues to grow in size.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that all adults working in the school are aware of the signs that a pupil may be at risk and the importance of reporting any concerns promptly. There are clear systems for reporting these concerns to the designated safeguarding leader (DSL). Leaders have ensured that when a pupil arrives mid-year from another school, all safeguarding information is gathered and integrated into the school's systems.

When concerns are raised, the DSL and deputies carefully evaluate the information provided. Where necessary, they promptly take appropriate steps, including working with outside agencies, to help keep pupils safe.

Pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe, including through the personal development curriculum and assemblies. They have secure knowledge about the risks they may face growing up and how to minimise those risks.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In some subjects, pupils are studying curriculums that have been developed relatively recently. In these subjects, older pupils have previously studied the 'old', less rigorous, curriculums. As a result, they have some gaps in their knowledge which is making new learning particularly challenging. Leaders should ensure that these gaps in knowledge are accurately identified and addressed.
- Leaders identified some areas of the previous personal development curriculum that were not as effective as they wished. A new curriculum has been introduced. However, leaders have not clearly identified how they are evaluating the effectiveness of the new curriculum. Leaders should clearly identify how they will reliably assess and evaluate the effectiveness of the new personal development curriculum. This will allow them to make informed decisions about whether the new personal development curriculum is achieving the desired improvements in supporting pupils' personal development, and whether further revisions are necessary.

## **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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	141179
<b>Local authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255731
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	474
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Alan Halsall
<b>Principal</b>	Richard McManus
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.theskiptonacademy.co.uk">www.theskiptonacademy.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	9 February 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of Moorlands Learning Trust.
- The number of pupils attending the school is below the national average but is increasing rapidly.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND in the school is above the national average.
- The school recently opened an additionally resourced provision, The Lookout, for up to eight pupils with communication and interaction needs.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal and several other senior leaders, including those responsible for behaviour and attendance, personal development and safeguarding. The lead inspector also met with a group of trustees and the chief executive officer of Moorlands Learning Trust.
- To evaluate the quality of education, inspectors undertook deep dives in mathematics, computing, English and geography. As part of the deep dive process, inspectors spoke to curriculum leaders, groups of teachers, talked with pupils about their work, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also met with leaders responsible for the reading programme in the school and visited reading sessions.
- Inspectors visited The Lookout provision and spoke to staff and pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed the systems that the school has in place to keep pupils safe. We spoke to several groups of pupils, including some single-gender groups, to listen to their experiences of school life. Inspectors scrutinised the school's safeguarding records to ensure that appropriate actions are being taken to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors met with the school's special educational needs coordinator, to check the systems that the school has in place to support pupils with SEND.
- The inspection team spoke to a range of staff from across the school, and reviewed the responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally, and informally, throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the outcomes of the parent survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the free-text responses that many parents added.

## Inspection team

Steve Wren, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sarah Chamings	Ofsted Inspector
Jamie Lawler	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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