

Inspection of Dixons Cottingley Academy

Cottingley New Road, Bingley BD16 1TZ

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 November 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high aspirations for pupils. Pupils receive a strong academic curriculum. Leaders sustain a focus on rapid and ongoing improvement. Pupils benefit from a climate of high expectations.

Pupils behave well in lessons and focus on their learning. They are polite and respectful towards each other and to staff. Pupils move calmly around the building following the clear routines that leaders have established. Teachers use every available opportunity for learning. For example, when pupils move between activities in physical education (PE), teachers use this time to quiz them on knowledge from previous lessons.

Teachers apply the behaviour systems fairly. However, in some cases, pupils feel that the rules are too strict. Some of these pupils do not feel confident to raise this with teachers. Bullying is rare in this school. When it does happen, staff deal with it effectively.

Leaders provide pupils with access to a range of extra-curricular activities. These include trips, visits and residential experiences. These opportunities widen pupils' horizons. Pupils benefit from a range of external speakers visiting the school to talk to them about careers and further education.

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

Leaders have designed a strong academic curriculum for pupils. They have placed the EBacc suite of subjects at the centre of this. Leaders make sure that all pupils have access to the same curriculum, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Subject leaders have carefully planned the order that pupils encounter new knowledge and have made sure that this builds on what pupils already know.

Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects. They explain information in a way that is easy for pupils to understand. Teachers use consistent routines in lessons. They devote time in each lesson to helping pupils recall knowledge from previous lessons. Teachers use assessment to check what pupils know. However, there is variance in how well teachers use this information to adapt their teaching and fill gaps in learning.

Leaders adapt the curriculum well for pupils with additional needs through their 'alternative pathway'. They ensure that these pupils receive the help that they need to be successful. These pupils study a broad range of subjects. Leaders ensure that these pupils receive the school's strongest teaching and that they remain part of the main school community.

Leaders emphasise the vital importance of reading. Pupils read regularly within 'DEAR' time (Drop Everything And Read) and in morning meetings. The library is well resourced with books matched to pupils' interests. Pupils read increasingly widely for pleasure. The school supports a number of pupils at the early stages of learning to read. These pupils receive extra help. In some cases, the precise gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge are not identified. Because of this, some pupils do not progress as well as they could.

Leaders have secured significantly improved behaviour. Previously very high levels of suspension have significantly reduced. Despite this, the rate of suspensions remains high; this is especially true for pupils with SEND. Rates of pupil absence and persistent absence over time have been too high. Leaders have put clear systems in place and these are beginning to improve pupils' attendance.

Leaders aim for pupils to make ambitious and well-informed decisions about their futures. Pupils receive a range of careers information from school and external sources. This sometimes forms part of wider academic learning. For example, after an English trip to see a performance of Macbeth, pupils met the cast and crew to learn about careers in theatre.

Trustees understand the strengths of the school. They know how to support and challenge leaders to ensure that the school continues to develop.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders place a strong emphasis on safeguarding. They have increased the size of the safeguarding and pastoral teams to add capacity. Leaders have made sure that staff are well trained. Staff know that keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility. Staff know how to report concerns about the safety or welfare of a pupil. Staff do this quickly and leaders act on this information.

Leaders work with several external agencies to support vulnerable pupils and their families. Leaders are tenacious and make sure that pupils get the support that they need.

Pupils feel safe and are confident to raise concerns with a member of staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is inconsistency in how well teachers use information from assessment to adapt their teaching. This means that some pupils' misconceptions are not addressed, leading to gaps in pupils' understanding. Leaders should further

embed training to ensure that all teachers understand how to adapt their teaching in response to information they gather from assessment.

- Suspensions remain too high. This is especially true for vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND. This results in these pupils missing valuable learning time and falling behind their peers. Leaders should examine more effectively the causes for vulnerable pupils receiving corrections and suspensions. They should then put strategies in place to address these and mitigate the risk of future suspension.

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

Unique reference number	146198
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	10241407
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	873
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mike Blackburn
Principal	Jason Patterson
Website	www.dixonsco.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school currently uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 11 with information about approved technical educational 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.
- Inspectors met with the chief executive officer, the chair of the trust and the principal during the inspection. They also met with a range of other senior and middle leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding, personal development, careers, curriculum, behaviour and attendance.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum in a number of other subjects.
- Inspectors also met with the SEND coordinator. They looked at a range of documentation regarding the support pupils with SEND receive. Inspectors looked at the quality of the provision for pupils with SEND in lessons.
- Inspectors met with the designated lead for safeguarding. They checked records of actions taken by leaders to keep pupils safe. Inspectors scrutinised the single central record.
- Inspectors spoke with a wide range of pupils and staff, formally and informally, over the course of the inspection about the safeguarding culture in school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including minutes from local governing body meetings and the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information regarding behaviour and attendance. They spoke to pupils who had been subject to sanctions. Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils at social times.
- Inspectors met with single-sex groups of pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with staff at the registered alternative provider.

Inspection team

Thomas Wraith, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Steve Wren	His Majesty's Inspector
Michelle Farr	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Jenner	His Majesty's Inspector

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