

# Inspection of Dixons McMillan Academy

Trinity Road, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD5 0JD

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Inspection dates: 26 and 27 September 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	Outstanding

The principal of this school is Kat Lang. This school is part of Dixons Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Luke Sparkes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mike Blackburn.

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

Pupils value the support and guidance that they receive at Dixons McMillan. Positive relationships are fostered, and this makes a real difference to pupils. They know that staff work hard to support them and to get to know them. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are included in the life of the school. There is a base called 'Mountain Rescue' where pupils with SEND can go to socialise in a quieter space and play games at break and lunchtimes. Pupils feel safe in school.

The school has high standards for pupils' behaviour. Routines are followed consistently well. Pupils know exactly what is expected of them, and many rise to meet these expectations. Behaviour in school is good. There have lately been some changes, which pupils are positive about. Pupils move around the building to lively music, which they help to select. Everyday, the school eats together during 'family dining'. This enables everyone to come together.

There are leadership opportunities for pupils, including head students, as well as school council positions. Pupils can use these opportunities to have a positive influence on the school, such as helping to plan culture days or influencing the items on the lunch menu.

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

The principal, trust leaders and those responsible for governance have high ambitions for pupils. A high number of pupils study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects, and the school has recently introduced more vocational options. Pupils can opt for some subjects at the end of Year 8. The school has ensured that the curriculum in Years 7 and 8 is matched to the aims and ambitions of the national curriculum so that pupils have the knowledge needed for this stage of their education.

In lessons, staff use a range of strategies to assess what pupils know. These are trust initiatives that the school adopts. There are regular 'Do Now' tasks at the beginning of lessons to check pupils' understanding. Teachers use mini whiteboards regularly to quickly see what all pupils know. If a pupil is stuck, they can turn their coloured 'prism' to amber or red and a teacher will come and help them. As a result of these consistent approaches, staff are very knowledgeable as to when pupils struggle and adapt their teaching as necessary. This is particularly helpful for pupils with SEND. Staff check for gaps in knowledge and ensure that they recover knowledge as necessary. This helps pupils to make progress.

The school has clear systems in place to identify weaker readers. Pupils' reading skills are assessed upon entry to the school and throughout Years 7 to 9. There is phonics teaching in place for those pupils who need it. There are 'reading for pleasure' events linked to World Book Day, and all pupils in Year 7 receive the gift of a book. Pupils can also volunteer to be school librarians. This helps to develop

pupils' enjoyment of reading.

Lessons are typically calm, and pupils can focus on their work. When needed, the school has well-thought-out systems in place to help pupils regulate their own behaviour. As a result, pupils are very clear on the rules and routines but know that these are underpinned by kindness and care. Attendance for some pupils, including those with SEND, is not high enough. Too many pupils are persistently absent from school.

There is a comprehensive personal development programme in place. There are regular culture days, and pupils know that these help them to gain an understanding of how other people live. As a result, pupils are tolerant and respectful of all faiths and religions. There is a full careers programme in place, and pupils go on to appropriate post-16 destinations. In key stage 3, pupils have timetabled 'elective' time. This provides pupils with many opportunities outside of the academic curriculum. Pupils in Year 9 all participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, and the vast majority of pupils complete their bronze award. In key stage 4, pupils can participate in sports teams and free music lessons. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities beyond the academic.

There has been a change of governance structure recently. The previous governing body is now called the 'Local Academy Board'. This is, in part, to provide a focus on community engagement. The Local Academy Board and trustees are effective at holding leaders to account for the quality of education they provide. The vast majority of staff are proud to work at the school and value the support they receive for their workload. Some early career teachers previously held non-teaching positions at the school. This reflects their enjoyment of working at the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Some pupils are absent from school too often. As a result, they miss important learning and fall behind their peers. The school must work to improve pupils' attendance.
- Too few pupils in key stage 4 access extra-curricular activities. This is because there are not enough activities in which to participate. The school must ensure that there are more opportunities for pupils to enhance their education beyond the academic curriculum.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	141002
<b>Local authority</b>	Bradford
<b>Inspection number</b>	10281377
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy free school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	673
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Mike Blackburn
<b>Principal</b>	Kat Lang
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.dixonsma.com/">http://www.dixonsma.com/</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	20 and 21 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of Dixons Academies Trust.
- The school uses one registered and one unregistered alternative provider for a very small number of pupils.
- 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

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

- Inspections are a point-of-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 leaders

and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspection team completed deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, food technology and history. To do this, inspectors met with subject leaders, had discussions with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school, priorities for improvement and minutes of governor body meetings.
- The lead inspector met with a representative from the local academy board, representatives from the board of trustees and the CEO of the trust.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising records and through discussions with staff and pupils.
- The inspection team visited the unregistered alternative provision that the school uses.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were considered through discussions and a review of Ofsted's surveys. The inspection team also considered correspondence that was given to inspectors during the inspection.

### **Inspection team**

Jessica McKay, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stuart Mcghee

Ofsted Inspector

Gillian Hemming

Ofsted Inspector

Richard Wood

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