

Ilkley Grammar School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	136905
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	385555
Inspection dates	10–11 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Neil Mackenzie

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,538
Of which number on roll in the sixth form	320
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ros Beeson
Headteacher	Gillian James
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by six additional inspectors. The inspectors saw 48 lessons and 48 different teachers. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and groups of students. Inspectors observed the academy's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including 462 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and 110 questionnaires completed by students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the academy's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The quality of teaching and learning and the rate at which students progress.
- The rate at which sixth form students progress.
- The effectiveness of the Academy's monitoring systems in promoting improvement.
- Improvements made over recent years.

Information about the school

Ilkley Grammar School is a larger-than-average, non-selective secondary school. The school converted to academy status in July 2011. It draws students from six main primary schools. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than the national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also much lower than the national average. Few students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The academy holds specialist status for science, mathematics and English.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school? 2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement 2

Main findings

Ilkley Grammar school provides its students with a good education. It is a welcoming place, one where students feel secure and where respect for each other is an important value. Consequently, relationships between students and staff are excellent.

Students join the academy with above average attainment, their progress is good and on leaving they achieve excellent examination results. They enjoy their learning and this is reflected in their positive attitudes and their high rates of attendance. Ilkley Grammar School students have high aspirations. The headteacher, together with members of the governing body and senior leaders, has a clear and consistent vision for the improvement of the academy based on sustainable change. Self-evaluation is effective. Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the academy's overall strengths and weaknesses and priorities identified for improvement are tackled effectively. Students' good and improving progress and high attainment together with other improvements such as those made to the curriculum demonstrate that the academy has a good capacity for further improvement.

Teaching is good overall and inspectors observed some examples of outstanding practice particularly in English and in design and technology. The good or better lessons ensure at least good progress. These are characterised by very positive relationships, with teachers constantly assessing the students' understanding and being confident enough to adapt what they are doing to better suit the needs of the students. Where progress is not so good students are unclear about how to improve, insufficient allowance is made for differences in ability and the marking of students' work is variable in quality and too infrequent. Whole-school systems for monitoring students' progress are good and there are effective strategies for middle and senior leaders to identify and support those students whose progress is causing concern.

Form time is not always used well and opportunities are missed for form tutors to work with students to develop their independent learning skills, helping them analyse their progress and exploring strategies with students to help them improve. Students are well cared for. They feel safe and they and their parents and carers are very positive about the academy and what it offers them. Significant and high quality provision is made for students whose circumstances make them potentially more vulnerable so that they can integrate effectively into academy life and enjoy success

with their peers. Students enjoy life in the sixth form and make good progress in their learning. They leave with high grades in a wide range of subjects. As one student said, 'We have the best of both worlds; we have a good time and we do well academically'. They particularly value the extra time, outside lessons, that teachers put in to help anyone who is finding the work difficult.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase rates of progress further by:
 - marking students' work more frequently and providing them with practical guidance on how to improve
 - ensuring the routine assessment of students' prior knowledge and understanding is always used to best effect when planning future lessons
 - providing tasks which are matched specifically to the needs of students
 - increasing students' engagement in their learning by providing more opportunities for collaborative and group work.

- Make better use of form time to improve students' independent learning skills to enable students to:
 - more systematically reflect on the quality of their work and their progress
 - develop strategies to achieve improvements in the quality of their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In lessons, students work at a high level and make good progress in their learning. They are keen to do well and have positive attitudes to their work. Attainment has been consistently high for many years and this includes in key subjects and in the specialist subjects of English, science and mathematics. Progress in English had been slower, but effective action taken has brought it into line with that in other subjects. There has been year-on-year improvement in progress for all subjects and it is now good. Students achieve exceptionally well and they enjoy their education.

The systems for tracking progress provide accurate information and current assessments indicate that all groups of students perform equally well. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported and they make good progress fully in line with their peers. Students' excellent attendance and high examination success prepare them well for their next step in education or employment, although their skills in group and collaborative work are not sufficiently well developed in all lessons. Students' behaviour is good. They move around the maze of buildings, external steps and narrow corridors calmly and efficiently. Local shopkeepers are complimentary about students' behaviour and students feel that when the very few incidents of bullying occur, they are dealt with efficiently. In a few lessons where teaching was less effective, behaviour deteriorated and progress slowed. Students demonstrate a high moral code and they socialise very well. Their understanding of societies and cultures beyond their own is not as strong and opportunities to extend students' spiritually are occasionally missed. Students make good contributions to their local and wider communities. Older students help younger ones and the academy council has been effective in initiating some improvements. Charity events are well supported and groups of students participate in the local

youth parliament and the literature festival. Students say school meals are appetising, but currently, not all can be accommodated in the small dining room. Older students tend to leave the premises for food and some make unhealthy choices. Participation rates in extra-curricular sports are good. Most students say they feel safe in school. This is because students socialise well, trust each other and the adults caring for them. They are taught how to be safe and all know how to react if they are unsure of a situation.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Where teaching is good or better, there is effective planning which is firmly based on accurate assessment of what students have recently understood. In an excellent Year 7 mathematics lesson, the teacher was constantly checking students' grasp of decimal work and was prepared to adapt the tasks she was giving to her students. Students in this class were given work that was precisely matched to their needs. However, good practice in assessment, planning, marking and guiding students is not always consistently applied by all teachers. There is still some teaching that is too dependent on teachers telling rather than giving students sufficient opportunity to be fully engaged in their learning through collaborative activities and group work. When this occurs, student engagement falls and progress slows.

The academy offers a good curriculum. At Key Stage 3, the academy has developed an imaginative, integrated approach to the delivery of humanities. Students respond well and enjoy the collaborative learning opportunities this course provides. The Key Stage 4 curriculum is mainly focused on academic subjects and students achieve well. In addition, there is a range of vocational courses, most of which are available through good partnerships with other local providers. These courses are popular and suit the students' needs. There is a wide range of cultural and sporting activities that extend the curriculum, the students' learning and their personal development well.

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

The academy provides good care, guidance and support for all students. There are good arrangements for students when joining or leaving the academy at key transition points. Students, who may be vulnerable due to their circumstances or lack confidence, receive excellent support and guidance from experienced and dedicated staff.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders, staff and the governing body are working effectively to raise attainment across the academy. There is a shared vision for improvement. Leaders know through accurate self-evaluation what it does well and what it needs to improve. Middle leaders are developing an increasing understanding of their responsibilities but consistency in effective leadership at this level is not yet fully established.

At the time of the inspection, the academy met the statutory safeguarding requirements. The governing body carries out its statutory duties effectively. It is actively involved in identifying priorities for improvement. Target-setting is realistic but challenging and the impact can be seen in the good progress and high attainment. Leaders work hard to ensure that all students achieve equally well and that any form of discrimination is not tolerated. The academy is a cohesive community, relationships are strong and positive. Students contribute well locally and some students benefit from cultural trips to France and Spain. The academy is taking action to provide more first-hand learning experiences of life in Britain as a multicultural community.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

The leadership and management in the sixth form are good and have been successful in accelerating progress over the last three years. The use of students' study time is tightly controlled, particularly in Year 12, and more frequent assessments have been introduced. Improvement planning identifies appropriate priorities for development. Leaders recognise that action plans could be more sharply focused with a clearer indication of precisely what is to be done, by whom and by when. A particular strength of the academic curriculum is the provision for extended project qualifications which were introduced last year. These projects, some of which are excellent in quality, give students an opportunity to explore a particular interest in depth. Teachers are very knowledgeable and thorough and they provide a good level of challenge to students, particularly through skilled questioning. However, the variety of activities is sometimes rather limited and students can become passive at times. Teachers do not always make good enough use of student targets, particularly in Year 12, to encourage and inform students about what they are expected to achieve. Like the main school, care, guidance and support systems are good, as are enrichment opportunities. The newly introduced iLeader course is encouraging greater input by the sixth form in supporting younger students.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth Form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers expressed appreciation and support for the academy and its work. They are happy with their children's experience, believe the academy keeps its students safe and say students enjoy school.

Some parents raised concerns about the academy site. It is a particularly difficult site to manage. The foundations of new building work were washed out during the summer when flood water rushed through the academy from the moor above. This caused delay and frustration. However, members of the governing body and leaders ensure students' safety and provide effective day-to-day management of these complex grounds and buildings.

Where individual concerns were highlighted by parents and carers, they tended to relate to the timing of communications with parents and carers, particularly with regard to progress reports and consultation evenings. The reporting system is currently under review and feedback from parents has already helped improve the termly reports.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ilkley Grammar School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 462 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,538 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	147	32	277	60	29	6	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	155	34	282	61	17	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	93	20	310	67	32	7	2	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	110	24	289	63	30	6	2	0
The teaching is good at this school	123	27	294	64	21	5	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	74	16	289	63	58	13	7	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	59	13	287	62	83	18	7	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	131	28	247	53	42	9	4	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	112	24	280	61	43	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	147	32	265	57	24	5	4	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	60	13	260	56	60	13	7	2
The school is led and managed effectively	151	33	261	56	20	4	5	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	162	35	273	59	20	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 October 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Ilkley Grammar School, Ilkley, LS29 8TR

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team to your academy and working with us. We thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to talk with you about your work and to listen to your views. We judge that Ilkley Grammar School is a good academy. We appreciated your courteous manner in dealing with fellow students and adults and we recognised the positive relationships you have with your teachers. You are all great ambassadors for your academy.

- There are many things we like about your school, the highlights were:
 - the excellent exam results you achieve at the end of your time in this academy
 - your high aspirations and excellent attendance records
 - the good care, guidance and support available for you
 - the way in which you and your parents and carers say you feel safe in school
 - the good range of curriculum opportunities available to you.

There are certain things we have asked the senior leaders to do in order to improve your academy even further. They are:

- increase the progress you make further by:
 - marking your work more frequently and providing you with practical guidance on how to improve
 - ensuring routine assessment of your understanding is always used to plan the next lessons
 - providing tasks which are matched more specifically to your needs
 - increasing your engagement in your learning by providing more opportunities for collaborative and group work.

We also felt that your form time was not always well used and have asked that your form teachers help improve your independent learning skills and help you reflect on the quality of your work and progress.

The inspection team hope you are pleased with the things we have said about your academy and that you are proud of what has been achieved. You will see that there are still some important things to do in order to make further improvements. If you all continue to work together this should be achievable.

Yours sincerely

Neil Mackenzie
Lead inspector

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