



ILKLEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

A MOORLANDS LEARNING TRUST ACADEMY

PERSONAL
BEST



HEADTEACHER'S WELCOME

Ilkley Grammar School is an outstanding comprehensive school and we pride ourselves on the quality of education, pastoral care and extensive enrichment opportunities provided to our students so that they succeed, thrive and achieve their Personal Best.

As the founding school of Moorlands Learning Trust, our reputation for excellence is widely recognised. Our academic results place us comfortably amongst the top 10-20% of schools in the country for both attainment and progress and our graded Ofsted inspections in both 2017 and 2024 judged the school to be 'Outstanding' in all areas of provision. We were the highest-ranked comprehensive school across Leeds, Bradford and North Yorkshire in The Sunday Times Schools Guide 2025, and we consistently feature in the 'Parent Power' publication as one of the top performing state schools in the North of England for standards at both GCSE and A-level.

Whilst there is a strong focus on challenging and supporting students to achieve their academic potential, we are equally committed to developing young adults who have the skills and qualities to make a positive difference through the lives they lead and the choices they make. Learners flourish when they feel happy, safe, respected, cared for and valued and we work hard to create a warm, tolerant and inclusive environment where values such as kindness and respect are championed, well-being and personal development are prioritised, and individual needs are met. Indeed, whilst we are really proud of the results our students achieve and the progress they make regardless of their starting points, we are also proud of the huge range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, leadership opportunities, and trips and visits on offer which help to shape character, build confidence, create memories and support personal growth.

On a personal level, I feel very privileged to lead such a wonderful school and warmly invite you to visit to see the excellent provision we have to offer. I look forward to meeting you.



Carly Purnell
Headteacher



'Ilkley Grammar School is an amazing school. This is a school where every pupil gets a chance to shine.

Academic success is very high. An extensive personal development offer ensures pupils achieve their personal best.'

Ofsted 2024



PERSONAL BEST

Our vision at Ilkley Grammar School is to provide a world-class, inclusive education and exceptional opportunities which will enrich us both individually and collectively as a community. We will inspire, support and challenge each other to achieve our Personal Best so that we all grow in wisdom and stature. By modelling our Personal Best values and championing equality and diversity, we will make a positive difference to our own lives and the lives of others and will be empowered to lead and influence positive change on a local, regional, national and global scale.

If students are to be fully prepared to live and thrive, work and lead in tomorrow's world then their academic success is of equal importance to their personal development and the shaping of their character so they can be the very best versions of themselves and achieve and demonstrate their Personal Best. Therefore, alongside the development of knowledge, skills and understanding, we also place great emphasis on our six Personal Best values: pride, respect, courage, responsibility, kindness, and resilience. These values permeate everything we do, support students to achieve their Personal Best and empower them to make a positive difference through the lives they lead.

Our curriculum dedicates time to supporting students to achieve their Personal Best with a bespoke Personal Best Time (PBT) programme. This aims to instil our values, as well as develop important characteristics and attributes which enable students to be successful learners, excellent friends and exceptional citizens and to "grow in wisdom and stature" in line with our Latin motto.



We take every opportunity to celebrate students' success in a variety of ways in school in order to positively encourage Personal Best at all times.



'Whether pupils excel, or need extra help, this school supports them to fulfil their potential.'

'School leaders have a clear and ambitious vision, which is instrumental in helping all pupils succeed.'

Ofsted 2024

'I am extremely grateful to all the staff who have supported my daughter throughout her seven years at IGS. They have always gone that extra mile over the years, stretching her, and giving her the opportunity to shine and reach her full potential. The staff who have taught her have made it a joy and a privilege.'

Parent of a former year 13 student



EXCEPTIONAL TEACHING THAT SUPPORTS AND CHALLENGES ALL

At Ilkley Grammar School, we believe in fostering scholarship, encouraging curiosity and nurturing a lifelong love of learning. We recognise that every student is unique and therefore our approach to teaching and learning is inclusive and personalised. We encourage students to think deeply and critically and to ensure that learning is rich, purposeful and long-lasting. Ofsted (2024) praised the fact that teachers ‘are experts at adapting lessons to meet pupils’ needs’ and that ‘they use many strategies to help pupils learn.’

Our highly qualified staff are experts in their fields and impart their knowledge with both skill and enthusiasm to ignite interest and build mastery so that students are able to retain and apply knowledge confidently. Relationships between staff and students are strong, creating a calm, purposeful and positive learning climate. As Ofsted highlighted, ‘pupils behave exceptionally well ... they enjoy their lessons ... and behave in a way that enables deep, meaningful classroom learning.’

Our staff deliver an engaging and expertly designed curriculum using modern technology alongside established teaching methods to develop core skills including resilience, independence and an understanding of how we learn best. With every student having an iPad as part of their school equipment, lessons are innovative and responsive, ensuring that all students are both supported and challenged to achieve their Personal Best and are fully prepared for life beyond Ilkley Grammar School.



‘The school is fully inclusive. Staff believe every pupil can succeed, no matter their background or any challenge they may face.’

Ofsted 2024

‘There is no limit on progression in this school.’

HMI Richard Jones, 2024



A WORLD CLASS CURRICULUM

It is our mission to provide a world class curriculum for all, giving our students access to “powerful knowledge” which promotes academic excellence, deepens understanding and enables them to have the luxury of choice for their futures.

Learning is carefully sequenced to allow students to know more and do more, and our approaches are underpinned by the principles of cognitive science in order to support retention and recall and ‘make learning stick’.

All students have a balanced and challenging curriculum, which provides strong academic foundations with the flexibility to tailor provision to meet students’ needs. There is a genuine commitment to personalisation which can be seen through the range of options and pathways at all levels. This includes our bespoke year 9 curriculum which allows the opportunity to study new courses in computer science, business, philosophy and law, alongside specialist technology, creative arts, PE and additional language options. This broadens students’ learning experiences and helps them to make informed decisions for GCSE and beyond.

We have the highest expectations of all and provide an outstanding education, which is enhanced by extensive extra-curricular opportunities, to support all students to achieve their Personal Best. We develop students through our ‘Personal Development’ programme where our students learn about community, leadership and tolerance. Our curriculum leads to exceptional levels of achievement, growth and positive, memorable experiences which last a lifetime.



‘Our children have all thrived at IGS both academically and personally. The quality of provision is exceptional, and we can’t recommend the school highly enough.’

Parents of children in Post-16 and year 8

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND OUTSTANDING PROGRESS

At Ilkley Grammar School, our students consistently achieve outstanding academic standards, reflected in impressive GCSE and A-level results and strong progression to competitive courses at top universities across the country.

Highlights from 2025 and 2024 include:

- 20% of all GCSE grades awarded at the very highest levels (9–8)
- Over 35% of GCSE grades at 7–9 (equivalent to the old A/A*)
- An overall pass rate of over 99% across all qualifications

While we are proud of this continued level of success, what is particularly important to us is the strong progress that students make, regardless of their ability. At IGS, every young person is encouraged, challenged, and supported to achieve their very best and to realise their full potential.

Our commitment to achievement and aspiration for all is reflected in our consistently strong progress scores, which place IGS among the country’s highest-performing comprehensive schools. Although no national progress scores will be published for this year due to the cancellation of SATs in 2020, our progress score in 2024 for all students, including those with Special Educational Needs, was +.54. This firmly placed IGS in the highest “well above average” category, ranking us within the top 15% of all state schools nationally, including selective schools.

As a result, Ilkley Grammar School enjoys an outstanding reputation – not only within our local community but also across the wider Leeds and Bradford regions – for combining academic excellence with a culture of ambition, aspiration, and success for all.



‘The school offers a rich curriculum that ensures all students achieve well – there is ambition for all.’

‘Pupils achieve excellent, sustained outcomes over time.’

Ofsted 2024

A SUPPORTIVE, SAFE AND CARING ENVIRONMENT

Underpinning our academic excellence and culture of high expectations is a deeply embedded commitment to pastoral care, where students' wellbeing and mental health are prioritised. Each student is supported by two dedicated non-teaching pastoral leaders, their form tutor, a progress and experience leader (PrExL) and a wide-ranging team of staff. With over 100 members of staff trained in Mental Health First Aid, as well as specialist in-school counsellors and an expert safeguarding team, we ensure that every young person feels valued, supported, and equipped with the guidance they need to flourish both academically and personally.

High standards of behaviour and safety are evident throughout the school, creating a welcoming environment where students feel secure, respected, and confident to focus on their learning. Our culture of kindness, responsibility, and mutual respect encourages students to support one another and to make a positive contribution, both within school and across the wider community.

To help every student reach their full potential, we offer a wide range of personalised interventions and tailored learning strategies. These include individual 'One Plans' that inform teachers of specific needs, ensuring that classroom teaching is responsive and inclusive, alongside in-class support and targeted, time-bound programmes in literacy, numeracy, and dyslexia. For students who benefit from a smaller, nurturing environment, our inclusive learning hub and nurture centre provide holistic support, building confidence, resilience and independence. These spaces also offer a safe retreat for students with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs, ensuring that every child has appropriate levels of care and support when they need it.

In September 2019, we proudly opened our School-Led Resource Provision (SRP) for students with an EHCP for Autistic Spectrum Condition and associated needs. The SRP enables students to thrive in mainstream lessons while developing essential personal and life skills, alongside receiving targeted interventions tailored to their EHCP. Responding to strong demand across the Wharfe Valley, Bradford Metropolitan District Council has recently funded an expansion, allowing the SRP to grow to a 24-place provision and further strengthening our inclusive, supportive, and aspirational offer.



'The school is a calm environment where pupils behave exceptionally well... Pupils care and show respect for each other.'

Ofsted 2024

'At IGS I feel valued and supported. Even though it's a big school, it is also a welcoming community where there are lots of opportunities to do well and make friends. My teachers, tutor, and Head of Year are always there to help me, challenging me to do my best and believe in myself.'

Year 9 student

OUTSTANDING PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ilkley Grammar School students benefit from an exceptional range of enrichment opportunities which allow them to explore their interests, develop new skills and showcase their talents.

Our extra-curricular sports programme is both extensive and popular, offering everything from rugby, football, hockey, dodgeball, cross-country, basketball and netball to dance, gymnastics, athletics, golf, cricket, rounders, tennis and badminton, with many students also competing successfully at regional and national level.

In the creative arts, opportunities are equally varied. The music department runs several choirs, orchestras, bands, including jazz, samba and rock bands, a chamber group, a composing club, and instrumental groups for all ages and abilities, supported by a team of peripatetic teachers. Students regularly perform live in a wide range of concerts and showcases, from formal events at the King's Hall to weekly lunchtime concerts and gig-style 'band nights' once a term. Drama clubs, musical theatre groups, script and devising clubs, the Backstagers group and the annual school production – which in 2026 will be Billy Elliot – provide exciting opportunities both on stage and behind the scenes. There are also opportunities to get involved in set, prop and costume design and making, as well as a range of art and photography clubs from origami and printmaking to clay and card-making.

Personal Development extends far beyond sport and the arts. Students can also pursue specialist interests through clubs in coding, creative writing, robotics, strategy games, crochet and chess, while others develop confidence and communication skills through public speaking competitions such as Youth Speaks, Debating Matters and the Speak Out Challenge. Each year, our students achieve considerable success in local and national competitions spanning science, maths, languages, debating, technology and the creative arts.

At IGS, Personal Development opportunities are organised into eight interconnected strands including Leadership and Influence, Active Citizenship and Community, Health and Wellbeing, and Respect, Equality and Diversity. These opportunities are shared with students and families via the Showbie platform and are launched each autumn at our hugely popular Student Leadership and Enrichment Fayre, where students can also apply for leadership roles as part of the iLeader programme.

The wide range of clubs, activities and competitions not only widens horizons but also fosters friendships, builds confidence and creates memorable experiences, ensuring every student has the chance to thrive beyond the classroom.



'The school provides fabulous opportunities including leadership roles, charity events and an impressive range of clubs. Our children are very lucky to be at IGS as they have the freedom to grow and develop as young people, to give back, make a positive difference and to shine.'

Parents of children in years 7, 10 and Post-16

'The provision for Personal Development is exceptional. It goes far beyond what is expected.'

HMI Richard Jones 2024

DISCOVERY AND ADVENTURE

Our students' academic life is enriched by a wide range of opportunities in which they explore and enjoy the world around them.

MEMORIES TO LAST A LIFETIME

Educational trips enhance studies beyond the classroom, making learning enjoyable and relevant. We run popular excursions to Iceland, Naples and the Belgium Battlefields, as well as foreign exchanges with schools in Coutances (Normandy) and Madrid. Sporting experiences range from visiting Wimbledon, netball and rugby tours and skiing in Europe or America. Equally, there is the opportunity to take advantage of numerous theatre, art and fieldwork trips, both locally and further afield.

In addition, we offer transformative experiences through the Duke of Edinburgh awards which help to develop communication skills, confidence, leadership and teamwork. For older students, we also work in partnership with World Challenge to provide opportunities which are simply extraordinary. In 2025, students completed a two-week expedition to Eswatini and Kruger National Park, and, in 2026, they will support conservative work and community initiatives in Malaysia. These opportunities, financed by student fundraising, provide powerful life-changing experiences.

CHALLENGE AND CELEBRATION WEEK: A UNIQUE END OF YEAR REWARD

To celebrate a year of hard work, IGS offers a unique week-long programme of activities designed to inspire, challenge, and reward each year group. Year 7 embark on an overnight camping adventure, a thrilling theme park visit, and an orienteering challenge, developing teamwork and resilience. Year 8 discover the excitement of London, experiencing its landmarks, shows, and cultural highlights, while students in year 9 push beyond their comfort zones at a residential activity centre set in stunning natural surroundings. For those who prefer to stay closer to home, a carousel of local day trips provides equally enriching opportunities for students in key stage 3.

Year 10 students enjoy a day of celebration before undertaking a one-week work experience placement, gaining confidence, independence, and insight into the world of work. This opportunity is repeated in Year 12, alongside international trips to Switzerland, Poland, Paris, Rome, and Berlin. Older students can also contribute as iLeaders, supporting key stage 3 trips and helping younger students make the most of their experiences.



'I love Challenge and Celebration Week – it's full of new experiences, challenges and making fun memories with your friends.'

Year 8 student

'My time at school was enriched by a wealth of activities, clubs, trips and opportunities, developing my confidence, leadership skills and friendships. I really value what the school has done for me – it has given me a great foundation for the future.'

Former year 13 student

LEADERSHIP AND INFLUENCE

At Ilkley Grammar School, developing students as leaders is at the heart of our ethos. Our unique iLeader programme offers over 40 leadership roles, giving students a wealth of opportunities to develop confidence, responsibility, and influence. Students' voices are valued through tutor group representation, student questionnaires, the Student Council, and both the Creative Arts and Sports Councils, ensuring they can shape life at IGS from the moment they join. We believe that leadership potential exists in every student, and our extensive opportunities nurture well-rounded, capable young leaders.

From their very first year, students are encouraged to take on positions of responsibility across all key stages, from classroom duties to whole-school initiatives. Leadership roles available from year 7 include eco, diversity, front of house and community iLeaders, alongside opportunities such as Model United Nations representatives, where students act as delegates and discuss global issues.

In key stage 4 and 5 the range of leadership opportunities expands further, with transition iLeaders, PR and marketing iLeaders, debating iLeaders, club iLeaders, subject ambassadors, and subject mentors who provide intervention and support for younger students. In the Creative Arts, students can be vocal captains, rock band and choir iLeaders and music, lighting and sound technicians. In PE, sport iLeaders not only help coach school teams but also work with local primary schools, encouraging participation and nurturing future sporting talent.

At Post-16, our Student Leadership Team (SLT) is led by three Head Students and nine Deputies, each of whom is linked to a specific year group to provide representation, support, and leadership across the school. Post-16 students also have the opportunity to become Wellbeing Coaches, undertaking accredited Mental Health First Aid training to play a vital role in peer-to-peer support.

Our long-established Student Council, with representatives from every year group, ensures that students have multiple platforms to share their experiences, influence decision-making, and make their voices genuinely heard. Their feedback, ideas, and initiatives help shape Ilkley Grammar School, making it not only an outstanding school, but also a vibrant and inclusive community where students belong.



'The school offers endless opportunities and experiences to unlock students' full potential. It genuinely places importance on wider personal development and happiness, and my children have thrived as a result.'

Parents of students in year 8 and year 12

'I really have grown in confidence since joining IGS. I am passionate about sustainability and protecting our environment and I take my role as an eco-iLeader seriously. I also love how we get the chance to raise a lot of money for different charities so we can make a positive difference to other people's lives.'

Year 10 student

PREPARATION FOR A SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

Post-16 is the culmination of the whole school experience, and we pride ourselves on the rich, personalised support that we offer our students during this exciting and challenging stage of their lives.

Students and staff have a proven track record of working together to achieve great success. Post-16 was officially graded as Outstanding as part of our Ofsted Inspection in 2017 and again in 2024, when inspectors concluded that ‘the sixth-form provision is a shining light within the school.’ With a thriving sixth-form community of over 600 students and a fantastic reputation for achievement, we continue to attract students from across the region, including those transferring from the private sector and selective schools.

Our students consistently achieve results well above national averages. In each of the past three years, between 33–35% of grades have been A/A*, 61–65% A*-B, and 81–85% A*-C. These results open doors to exceptional opportunities, from Oxbridge (with 30 successful offers since 2023) and other Russell Group universities, to highly competitive courses such as medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, law, and engineering, as well as higher-level apprenticeships with prestigious employers including Rolls Royce, PwC, Deloitte, Ernst & Young, Accenture, and Morrisons.

We provide outstanding teaching delivered by expert and inspirational staff, alongside specialist pastoral care and a broad curriculum of over 30 academic and vocational courses which allows every student to flourish. This is complemented by an extensive enrichment programme, described by Ofsted as ‘exemplary’, which includes sports leadership qualifications, work experience, a plethora of leadership opportunities, Artsmark Gold Award projects, the highly personalised Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), a post-16 discussion group, and access to our impressive Next Steps programme.

Such provision helps students to grow in both wisdom and stature in line with our Latin motto: sapientia et statura proficiamus. They leave IGS as well-rounded, confident young adults who are not only academically successful, but also have the skills, qualities and values to make a positive difference to their own lives and the lives of others.



“The post-16 student body at IGS is a hard-working and resilient community that prides itself on the core values of kindness, responsibility, and courage. Students embody and promote these values to create a friendly, inclusive and welcoming post-16 community. The vast range of extra-curricular clubs spanning sports, leadership and academics allows all students to take their own personal journey of discovery, whether that be related to school subjects or wider interests.

Our large post-16 body enjoys playing an active role in both the IGS, and the wider Ilkley community through an array of participation initiatives. Students are given fantastic leadership opportunities and enjoy developing indispensable skills through interacting with, and guiding, the lower school students. Post-16 teaching staff are able to stimulate learning beyond the curriculum by encouraging research and interest into wider areas of their subjects. Our excellent pastoral and academic support team ensure all students achieve their Personal Best, while looking after their personal well-being. IGS’s outstanding teaching, extra-curricular opportunities and support ensure all students leave as well-rounded individuals, well-prepared for whatever journey lays ahead, and proud to have been an IGS student.”

Daisy Button, Will Fellows and Maiya Gowon – Head Students 2025-26





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