

Inspection of Heckmondwike Grammar School

High Street, Heckmondwike, West Yorkshire WF16 0AH

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 April 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Heckmondwike Grammar is a friendly and welcoming school. It is an exciting place in which to learn. Expectations are high, with regard to work in school and at home. Pupils are very polite, articulate and courteous. They live the school's values of respect, responsibility and excellence. Pupils follow an ambitious curriculum. They gain deep knowledge and understanding in a wide range of subjects. Pupils achieve very high standards by the end of key stage 4. Some sixth-form learners find it difficult to adapt to the challenges of A-level work.

Behaviour is exceptional. Respectful relationships and leaders' high expectations mean that pupils behave extremely well. Pupils are happy and feel safe. Bullying is rare. When it happens, pupils are confident that adults will sort it out.

To quote the headteacher: 'We work hard and we play hard.' Leaders provide pupils with a huge range of experiences. These activities enrich and enhance pupils' learning. They range from the Duke of Edinburgh's Award to school productions. Clubs include such things as a dice game club, mindfulness, astronomy and eco-politics clubs. Some pupils are proud to start and lead clubs themselves. This helps to develop their leadership skills. Pupils have raised a great deal of money for charity. A 'sleep out' to raise money for the homeless is a recent example.

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

Over time, pupils make very strong progress. The pace of learning is fast. Teachers cover key stage 3, for example, in two years rather than three. The headteacher is passionate about the school and has a clear vision for its development. He has led a review of the curriculum. There are now detailed curriculum plans in place for each subject. Plans highlight the sequence by which pupils learn important knowledge. Curriculum leaders have identified the 'golden nuggets' of knowledge that teachers need to stress the most. Teachers emphasise this knowledge regularly, so that pupils can remember it. Pupils can talk in detail about what they have learned and remembered across the curriculum.

Leaders know their school well, in terms of both strengths and weaker areas. In the past, for example, pupils' progress in languages was weak. This is no longer the case. Leaders have been successful in their work to improve standards in this subject. They continue to work on areas such as chemistry, which does not yet meet their high standards.

There are very few weaker readers, and they receive effective support. There is a focus across the school on reading for pleasure. Pupils in key stage 3 have a library lesson. Pupils in key stages 3 and 4 read quietly in one tutor session per week. The support provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective. Pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum as everyone else. Leaders have the same high expectations of these pupils. They provide teachers with up-to-date information on the additional learning needs of individual pupils. In

lessons, teachers use this information to make the adjustments that pupils with SEND need to do well.

The extra-curricular life of the school is very strong. The vast majority of pupils take up something from the wide-ranging offer. There is a detailed programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) for all pupils from Years 7 to 11. Specialist teachers plan the programme and produce resources. However, there are non-specialists and form tutors who teach key material. There is some variation in the quality of learning. Pupils cannot always remember the subject content in as much detail as they do in other subjects. Leaders are aware of the need for further training in this area.

There are strengths in the programme of careers information, education, advice and guidance (CIEAG). All pupils receive independent advice and guidance, and the school is compliant with the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships. Pupils say they would like to see more sessions on non-university career paths. Leaders do review the provision. They now need to ensure that these reviews lead to improvements.

Staff see that leaders at all levels are mindful of their workload. Staff morale is high.

The vast majority of learners in the large sixth form achieve high grades. Many of them go on to gain places at the most competitive universities. However, there are some learners who do not adapt as well to the demands of A-level study. As a result, progress in the sixth form is not as strong as in the main school. Leaders recognise that work experience needs to be reintroduced into the curriculum and have plans in place to do so. The PHSE programme in the sixth form is not as well developed as it is in the rest of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong team of staff leading this area, all trained to a high level. Training for the rest of the staff is comprehensive. As a result, staff are vigilant and act promptly, should they have a concern. Leaders respond very quickly to individual cases. They work with a wide variety of external agencies to meet the needs of their pupils. Their pupils come from a range of local authorities. Leaders have built good working relationships with social services in each of these local authorities.

Pupils feel safe. Their strong relationships in the school mean that pupils have an adult they can talk to. Pupils have confidence that staff will help them solve any problems.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some sixth-form learners, particularly those coming from other schools, struggle with the skills required for success at A level. As a result, some of these students do not fulfil their potential. Leaders need to strengthen the systems in place to identify these learners early and provide them with the support they need to succeed at this level.
- Leaders do not attach sufficient importance to work experience and PSHE in the sixth form. Consequently, learners do not have access to key aspects of these important parts of their education. Leaders must put in place a systematic programme to develop the PSHE curriculum in the sixth form and ensure that work experience is a key part of every sixth-form learner's programme of study.
- Pupils in both key stage 4 and the sixth form suggest that they do not get enough input in careers in non-university options. Hence, they do not have a clear picture of everything which is available to them. Leaders should ensure that the CIEAG programme across the school covers the full range of options.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	136283
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10211902
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1547
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	505
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jane Dixon
Headteacher	Peter Roberts
Website	www.heckgrammar.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 November 2007

Information about this school

- The academy is a selective grammar school, catering for the needs of the top 25% of the ability range.
- The present headteacher took up post in September 2019. He was previously the deputy headteacher.
- It is a standalone academy converter.
- The academy uses one alternative provider for three pupils, Ethos College.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this 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 headteacher, senior leaders, representatives of the local authority and governors, including the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, modern foreign languages, history, design and technology and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector also visited additional lessons in business studies, psychology, music, art and biology. He spoke to pupils in those lessons about their learning.
- Inspectors met with leaders, members of staff and pupils to evaluate the arrangements for safeguarding in school. They looked at records of actions taken by leaders to protect pupils at risk. They also looked at bullying logs. Inspectors checked whether members of staff understood the safeguarding policy and procedures. They checked whether pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including online.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school's development plan, minutes of governing body meetings and several policies.
- Inspectors spoke informally with pupils at break and lunchtime.
- They met formally with groups of pupils across the age range.
- Parents' views were taken into account by considering the 281 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the 185 written responses. Inspectors also considered the 110 responses from staff to their online inspection questionnaire, and the 606 responses from pupils.

Inspection team

David Pridding, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Marc Doyle	Ofsted Inspector
Kate Lounds	Ofsted Inspector
Tricia Stevens	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Powell	Ofsted Inspector

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