

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Skelmanthorpe Academy

Elm Street, Skelmanthorpe, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD8 9DZ

Inspection date:

29 April 2025

Outcome

Skelmanthorpe Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Sarah Senior. This school is part of Learning Accord Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Elaine Watson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Baljit Birring.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy school where everyone is made to feel welcome. Pupils respond well to the school's high expectations for their learning and behaviour. Lessons are calm and purposeful. Pupils achieve well overall.

Children in the early years are supported to settle quickly and learn routines that promote learning. The school provides plenty of opportunities to stimulate children's interests, for example, they visit allotments to grow plants. Children in the early years are well prepared for future learning.

The school's work to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain is a strength. The range of clubs on offer, such as drama, ukulele and 'eco-art' club, help to develop pupils' interests. The school ensures that pupils learn to stay safe in the local community and when online. Pupils benefit from a range of visitors, including representatives from the community police, fire service and the NSPCC. Pupils feel confident to speak to an adult if they are worried. This helps pupils to feel safe. Pupils learn about different cultures. They enjoy listening to visitors of different faiths and of no faith. This helps pupils to develop respect for others.

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

There have been many changes in staff since the previous inspection. With support from leaders in the trust, the school has ensured that standards have been maintained throughout this time. The curriculum is sequenced to enable pupils to build knowledge as they progress through the school. Teaching approaches in all subjects support pupils to remember important knowledge. For example, pupils revisit prior learning before new content is introduced. In mathematics, younger pupils practise number bonds and place value in lessons. Pupils gain fluency in their knowledge of numbers. This helps older pupils to confidently apply their knowledge to solve more-complex problems.

In English and mathematics, the school ensures that teachers precisely identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge. This information is used to inform teaching and to help pupils to keep up. However, occasionally, in some other subjects, checks on pupils' understanding lack precision. Consequently, some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge or misconceptions. This means that pupils do not move forward in their learning as quickly as they could.

The school prioritises reading. Right from the start of Reception, children learn the letters and sounds they need to help them to read words. The school makes sure that pupils who struggle to read get the help that they need to keep up. Expert staff are skilled in supporting pupils to apply their knowledge of phonics to reading and writing. Pupils get plenty of practise to help them to read fluently. They benefit from the diverse range of books on offer.

The school works well with external professionals, such as educational psychologists, to identify and assess any special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) that pupils may have. Leaders ensure that staff have the information that they need to provide the right support for each pupil. Pupils with SEND are supported effectively to access the full curriculum. They achieve well from their starting points.

The early years classroom is set out to provide stimulating and engaging learning. Staff model language and conversations. They encourage children to talk to each other using the new vocabulary they have learned. Staff are skilled at making the most of the learning opportunities in the provision. However, some learning activities are not as well designed to promote learning, particularly in the outdoor provision. This means that, at times, children do not learn as well as they could.

Pupils show high levels of respect for each other and the adults who care for them. Older pupils model positive behaviour to younger pupils. They enjoy making decisions to help improve the school, such as helping create the 'RAINBOW' ladder to reward positive behaviour. Pupils learn about the importance of healthy lifestyles. They enjoy the range of sports on offer to help them to keep fit. Assemblies and visitors help pupils understand about risks in the local community. Pupils are well prepared for life beyond the school.

Those responsible for governance understand the school well. They provide support and challenge to ensure that all pupils benefit from a high-quality education. Leaders and staff

share the same ambitious vision. Everyone is dedicated to supporting pupils to succeed. Staff value the professional development that they receive and the support to manage their workload. They are proud of their school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the early years, some learning activities are not as well designed to promote learning in the outdoor provision. At times, children do not learn as well as they could. The school should ensure that children's learning in all areas of provision fully contributes to the development of their knowledge and skills.
- Occasionally, checks on pupils' understanding in some foundation subjects are not precise enough. This means that some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge or misconceptions. The school should ensure that assessment is used consistently well to support pupils to build knowledge effectively and enable pupils to achieve highly.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in January 2020.

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

Unique reference number	143230
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10346616
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	133
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Baljit Birring
CEO of the trust	Elaine Watson
Headteacher	Sarah Senior
Website	www.skelmanthorpeacademy.org
Dates of previous inspection	28 and 29 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Skelmanthorpe Academy is part of the Learning Accord Academy Trust.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been many changes in staff.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, acting assistant headteacher, and other members of staff. The lead inspector met with trust representatives, including the CEO and the chair of the trust.

- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at social times. They spoke with pupils about their views of the school and their learning, behaviour and safety.
- As well as speaking to parents at the school gate, inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors considered the views of staff in the responses to Ofsted's staff survey and in meetings with staff.

Inspection team

Kathryn McDonald, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Neil Butler

Ofsted Inspector

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