

Inspection of Appleton Academy

Woodside Road, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD12 8AL

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 November 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Appleton Academy is an inclusive and friendly school. It caters for primary and secondary-age pupils. Overall, pupils are happy at the school; they say that they feel safe. They told inspectors that if bullying happens, it is quickly dealt with by adults. Pupils say that the school has improved, including behaviour. Many parents and staff agree. As one parent, typical of many, commented, 'My child enjoys coming to school and he feels well supported by staff.'

Leaders have high expectations of pupils. These expectations are evident as you walk around the school. The school is calm and purposeful. Leaders have improved the curriculum in many subjects. Pupils enjoy learning here. As a result, pupils are achieving well in a wide range of subjects.

Staff go the extra mile to support pupils' personal development. Pupils' physical and mental health are well supported by staff. Pupils value the extensive opportunities that the school offers. For example, there are lots of visits and after-school activities, including sports, music and chess clubs. These are very popular. Pupils willingly take on leadership roles in school. Members of the school council spoke proudly about helping to design the playground. Pupils feel listened to and they are proud of their school.

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

The trust, governors and senior leaders have a clear vision for the school. They have improved many aspects of the school including the quality of education that pupils receive.

Senior leaders have revised the school's curriculum so that it is ambitious for all pupils including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have ensured that the primary-phase curriculum is broad. In the secondary phase, leaders have introduced a more ambitious curriculum. Between Year 7 and Year 9, pupils study a wide range of subjects. This provides a solid foundation when pupils begin their GCSE subjects in Year 10.

Subject leaders organise lessons in sequence so that pupils build on their knowledge and skills from Nursery through to Year 11. In most subjects, including English, mathematics and science, curriculum leaders have identified precisely what they want pupils to learn and when. In these subjects, pupils know and remember more. In a few subjects, such as modern foreign languages (MFL) and music, plans are less well developed. Leaders have plans in place to address this.

Teachers encourage pupils to use academic vocabulary. For example, in English lessons that inspectors visited, pupils in Year 11 correctly used words such as 'Machiavellian' and 'transgressor'. The focus on vocabulary supports pupils' learning in other subjects. Pupils confidently use subject-specific vocabulary in different subjects.

Leaders encourage pupils to read often. They have successfully developed pupils' love of reading. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the various authors and poets that come into school. Pupils enjoy reading books in one of the inviting reading areas, including the attractive well-stocked library.

Phonics is taught well. Staff who teach phonics are well trained. Children who fall behind in their reading receive extra support. This helps them to catch up quickly.

In the early years, children are happy and well cared for. Staff know and engage well with children. Staff help parents to support their children's learning. Staff are highly skilled and knowledgeable about how young children learn. Teachers provide children with many stimulating activities. During this visit, children were happily singing songs to help them learn how to count. Children are interested and love learning here.

The school is very inclusive. The new resource base provision for pupils with communication difficulties and autism is well led. Pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. Staff are effective in meeting pupils' needs. 'The Hub' provides a range of effective individual support and interventions. This helps pupils achieve well.

Leaders do much to support pupils' personal development. They have put in place an 'enrichment' curriculum to broaden pupils' horizons. For example, a large number of pupils complete the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Pupils value the wide range of experiences they have in lessons and beyond. Teachers plan many exciting trips and visits to complement the curriculum. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, some activities have been paused. Many have restarted. For example, there is an overseas visit planned to Berlin that is linked to the history curriculum and a Year 6 residential visit to Nell Bank.

Governors know the school well and visit often. They are well informed. Governors understand the strengths of the school and what needs to improve. They effectively hold school leaders to account for the quality of education at school. The trust has provided important support. Leaders, including governors, actively listen to the views of staff. They act to improve their well-being and reduce workload. Staff are typically happy and proud to work at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors make sure that safeguarding is a high priority. The leadership of safeguarding is rigorous and responsive to the needs of pupils. There are many pupils who are vulnerable and in need of help and protection. Staff receive regular training on safeguarding. They are fully aware of their responsibilities and take them seriously. Leaders and staff are vigilant. Safeguarding concerns are dealt with thoroughly.

There is a strong pastoral team, including a social worker who provides effective support for pupils. The pastoral team is tenacious in its work to get the right support for vulnerable pupils and families. As a result, there is strong culture of safeguarding.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Curriculum plans are less well-developed in some subjects, such as MFL and music. As a result, pupils do not develop the skills and knowledge that they need in these subjects. Senior leaders should ensure that they carry out their already established plans to develop these subjects, to ensure that curriculum plans are consistently strong and effectively implemented in all subjects. This is so that pupils, over time, know and remember more in these subjects.

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	145173
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	10200746
Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1261
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of the trust	Trevor Evans
Chair of governing body	Sally Wike
Executive Headteacher	Helen Jones
Website	www.appletonacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of Exceed Academies Trust.
- The school uses alternative education providers for a small number of secondary-age pupils. The providers used are The James Project, Calderdale College, High Twined, TLG Bradford, Prism Youth Project and Bradford Alternative Provision.

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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer. Inspectors also met with the executive principal, the senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator, middle leaders and a range of

teaching and support staff. An inspector spoke with representatives of the local governing body.

- Inspectors evaluated the quality of education by looking closely at the following subjects: early reading, English, mathematics and science. Here, inspectors met with the curriculum leaders for each subject, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally, to discuss their views on behaviour. Inspectors also met with different members of staff and support staff, to gauge their views on how well pupils behave and conduct themselves. Inspectors spoke to some pupils who have received sanctions in the past.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding. Inspectors looked at the school's policies relating to safeguarding, met the designated safeguarding lead and considered records of the vetting checks the school makes on its staff.
- Inspectors looked at other information about behaviour, attendance and extra-curricular activities that support pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors considered the 126 responses to Ofsted pupils' survey and 75 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff. Inspectors also considered the views of the 24 parents in their responses to Ofsted's online survey and Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, as well as the 23 free-text responses.

Inspection team

Jean Watt, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Liz Cresswell	Ofsted Inspector
Garry Stout	Ofsted Inspector
Janet Sheriff	Ofsted Inspector
Janice Gorch	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021