

Allerton High School

King Lane, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS17 7AG

Inspection dates

12–13 December 2018

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher leads the school with passion, determination and skill. She is highly respected by pupils, staff, parents and carers. The headteacher leaves no stone unturned in the pursuit of excellence.
- The headteacher is ably supported by her senior team and members of the governing body. Leaders know their school well. They work relentlessly to make their school even better. They are highly effective in improving standards of provision.
- The school now has a history of outstanding outcomes for its pupils. Pupils make sustained progress across the curriculum and the standards that they reach are high.
- The curriculum is responsive to pupils' interests and needs. The way in which it is organised helps to motivate pupils. The structure of the curriculum helps pupils to reach high standards.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. There is a strong focus on the development of subject knowledge. Teachers question pupils well to ensure that their learning is pushed on.
- Allerton High is a harmonious community. Pupils show high levels of respect towards other pupils and with adults in school. Pupils actively support each other and celebrate differences.
- Pupils show excellent attitudes to learning. There is a thirst for knowledge and an excitement about lessons.
- Behaviour around the building is orderly and sensible. Within classrooms, behaviour is excellent. Pupils respond well to the systems in place, which ensure that they behave well.
- Members of staff know individual pupils' academic and pastoral needs very well. The behaviour team and the achievement team support pupils to stay focused and make progress.
- Leadership opportunities are excellent. Pupils, and students in the sixth form, have a real say in how the school operates.
- Students in the sixth form benefit from strong teaching and high-quality pastoral support. There is some variability across subjects, but overall, provision is outstanding. Sixth-form students are excellent role models for younger pupils.
- The school's mission is to 'enable young people to achieve success'. It does this outstandingly well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further decrease the variation in achievement between subjects in the sixth form.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher is exceptional. Her leadership has transformed the school. Not only do pupils make phenomenal progress and reach high standards, but they also develop into well-rounded individuals who are ready to take their place in society. They have a thirst for learning and are committed to their education.
- At the heart of leadership at this school is a dogged determination to ensure that every pupil receives the schooling that they deserve. Nothing but the best will do. Systems to check the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils are making are excellent. Development planning is closely aligned to any relative weaknesses that are identified, in addition to further improving pupils' wider experiences at school.
- One parent reflected the views of many, writing, 'Allerton High has gone from strength to strength over the time my children have attended. I would strongly recommend this school to any parent.'
- The way in which the curriculum is organised is one of the drivers behind the strong rates of progress that pupils make. At various points during their time at school, pupils have option choices. These enable pupils to keep a broad base of subjects, while also focusing in on others. One of the results of this system is that the majority of pupils continue to study the subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate (English, mathematics, science, a modern or ancient language, and either history or geography). The formal curriculum is enhanced by wider opportunities offered to pupils, both within the school day and beyond. After the final lesson of the day, the school is still buzzing with pupils engaged in a variety of activities.
- Senior leaders are highly effective in their roles. They ably support the headteacher in the day-to-day running of the school and in driving improvements. They ensure that the quality of education on offer is excellent. Senior leaders are, in turn, supported by a strong tier of middle leaders who are fully accountable for their specific areas or subjects.
- Members of staff talked positively about the support that they receive to help them to develop into even better teachers. Inspectors agree that professional development is tailored to support individual members of staff, in addition to focusing on developments at school. Newly qualified teachers are particularly well served at Allerton High.
- Additional finance that the school receives to support disadvantaged pupils is used well. The progress that these pupils make from their starting points is impressive, partly because of a targeted approach to the use of these funds. Similarly, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make gains in their learning as a result of an intelligent use of finances and resources. This includes those pupils who are attached to the specially resourced provision for speech, language and communication needs.
- Pupils receive impartial careers education, information and guidance throughout each key stage. Pupils told inspectors that they find 'guided choices' and 'gateway courses' very helpful in enabling them to make sensible choices at GCSE option time and when deciding what to do after leaving the sixth form. Very few pupils do not enter

education, employment or training when they leave the school at either 16 or at 18 as a result.

- Several leaders, including the headteacher, are involved in supporting other schools and are learning and benefiting from this experience. The local authority provides appropriate light touch support and challenge to the school. This is appreciated by senior leaders.
- Parents, staff and pupils are overwhelmingly happy with the quality of education at school and rightly so. Inspectors judge that this is an outstanding place to learn.

Governance of the school

- The governing body makes a strong contribution to the school's work and provides strategic direction to the headteacher and leadership team. Governors share leaders' passion and commitment to ensure that the school is the best that it can be.
- Governors take their statutory responsibilities very seriously. The governor with oversight of safeguarding has been instrumental in ensuring that policies and procedures are tight and that any issues brought to her attention are dealt with immediately.
- Governors support and challenge leaders well. They visit school regularly. Records that are made of visits to link departments are comprehensive and show a deep understanding of the strengths of the school. Governors think about their own effectiveness and they regularly complete a skills audit to this end.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The headteacher makes sure that any pupils who are potentially at risk receive the support that they require. When working with outside agencies, she is highly tenacious in this regard.
- Pupils report that they feel safe at school. This is echoed by the vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- School policies reflect the latest requirements. Leaders make the appropriate checks when staff are appointed. Governors, senior leaders and members of staff are all suitably trained in safeguarding. They understand what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's welfare or safety.
- If ever an error of communication occurs, or incidences where the school could have acted more quickly are identified, the headteacher responds swiftly and robustly. As a result, safeguarding processes continue to improve and pupils are increasingly well supported.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching is characterised by a strong focus on academic content. Teachers plan lessons that offer pupils intellectual challenge and that stretch their understanding of the subject being studied. Teachers ensure that their planning meets the needs of the

pupils in their classes. Pupils play their part in lessons exceptionally well. They are keen to learn, listen intently and show a thirst for knowledge. They want to do their best.

- Teachers are relentless in thinking how best to develop their craft. Recently, 'purple challenges' have been introduced to ensure that pupils think deeply in lessons. These have been effective in 'promoting academic resilience and independent learning'. Pupils told inspectors that they appreciate being challenged and that they enjoy thinking at a high level.
- Teachers question pupils well. They listen carefully to the answers that pupils give and then shape their next lines of enquiry accordingly. Teachers 'read the class' well and know when to move on and when to consolidate learning.
- Pupils appreciate the wide range of subjects that they can choose from as they progress through school. 'Gateway courses' and 'guided choices' help to keep pupils motivated and focused on their learning. Pupils also told inspectors how they like the way that teachers provide any intervention needed. They say this helps them with concepts that they find more challenging.
- Teachers consider, carefully, how they can consolidate literacy and numeracy in their lessons. For example, in science and mathematics, subject vocabulary that is commonly misspelt, is displayed on walls. This encourages pupils to focus on aspects of literacy, in addition to the task in hand. Pupils develop their English and mathematical skills well across the curriculum.
- Homework is set regularly and makes a good contribution to developing pupils' independent learning skills. Homework tasks provide opportunities for students to practise key skills in each subject, as well as to develop deeper thinking.
- Teachers are not complacent. A recent innovation has been the development of pupil profiles for Year 7 pupils. With the express purpose of ensuring that every single pupil is 'caught up' in the excitement of learning, these profiles give teachers ideas of how to spark the interests of even the most reluctant learner.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the standard of teaching and the quality of education on offer. Inspectors agree that teaching is a major strength of the school. The quality of teaching is consistently strong. This, combined with a responsive curriculum and the high level of focus on the part of the pupils, is helping pupils to succeed in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils, parents and staff share this view.
- Leaders, staff and pupils work together to make the school a harmonious community. Pupils are respectful, courteous and kind to one another. Pupils of different faiths and those without a faith get on well together. The Multi Faith Centre, located on the school premises, helps to promote an understanding and celebration of different beliefs.

- Pupils' personal development is the focus of daily 'coaching' sessions. Here, pupils focus on different themes, such as how to stay healthy. Teachers provide pupils with guidance on how to stay safe, including how to protect themselves from risks associated with radicalism, exploitation and the use of the internet. A high priority is given to ensuring that enough curriculum time is devoted to religious education and personal, social and health education.
- Inspectors were impressed by the level of positivity that pupils showed about assemblies. Pupils feel that these are important events at school and enjoy attending them. Pupils have the opportunity to get involved in leading assemblies. Pupils also told inspectors that they are grateful for the focus that teachers have placed on exploring issues linked to mental health. This information and support are provided through assemblies and the 'coaching' programme.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop a wide range of skills at school and to become 'rounded individuals'. There are opportunities to support local charities and to help shape provision at the school. The very active junior leadership team, together with student leaders in the sixth form, work with members of staff to this end.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. They know about different forms of bullying, including those presented by technology and social media. Pupils are confident that staff will help them to deal with any potential issues. They say that any bullying is dealt with swiftly and robustly. Parents and staff overwhelmingly agree that pupils are safe.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are friendly, articulate and self-confident. They talked to inspectors about their school with the greatest of pride. They show respect for the school environment and help to keep it tidy.
- Pupils' behaviour, as they move around the building and as they focus on learning in lessons, is exemplary. No low-level disruption or misbehaviour of any kind was observed during the inspection. The school's behaviour logs indicate that any disruption to learning is rare and continues to fall. The use of 'blue cards' for removal from lessons and the use of the isolation room are also rare. Members of the behaviour team support those pupils who need help to focus in lessons. Some pupils also have 'key workers' to help them at school.
- Members of staff use the school's systems for rewards consistently well. Pupils collect rewards through lessons known as 'epics'. With enough 'epics', pupils are able to 'jump the queue' at lunchtime at school or even save up for a trip to Flamingo Land. What is more, if pupils earn enough 'epics', they can even buy a 'jump the queue' pass at Flamingo Land!
- School leaders work proactively with pupils who struggle to behave consistently well. When needed, leaders organise alternative placements and work with other local schools to engage these pupils in their learning. As a result of 'wrapping' the curriculum around the needs of these pupils, the number of fixed-term exclusions is low. No pupil has been permanently excluded from school in the past ten years.

- Pupils are keen to learn and come to school regularly and punctually. Attendance rates are above national averages and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is low.
- Pupils who attend off-site provision are well looked after. Leaders have close relationships with these providers and check that pupils are safe and that their behaviour meets expectations.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils make outstanding progress during their time at school. In 2016 and 2017, pupils started Year 7 with average levels of attainment. They made huge strides in their learning and reached standards that are well above the national averages at the end of Year 11. They made excellent progress in a wide variety of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, history, geography and modern languages. In 2017, the progress that pupils made across the curriculum was in the top 5% of all schools nationally. Unvalidated data, for pupils who left Year 11 in 2018, paints a similarly positive picture of the progress that they made.
- In 2018, pupils in Year 11 reached high standards in their GCSE examinations: 56% of pupils achieved grade 5 or above in English and mathematics compared to the national average of 40%, for example. Achievement was equally strong across the curriculum. The majority of pupils sat the suite of qualifications known as the English Baccalaureate by choice. The progress that pupils made and the standards that they reached in these subjects in 2018 was impressive. There is a history of strong achievement in the English Baccalaureate.
- Disadvantaged pupils do very well at Allerton High School. The progress that they make from their individual starting points is much stronger than that of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. In 2018, the standards that these pupils reached was similar to those of all pupils nationally. Senior leaders have high expectations for all of their pupils. A greater proportion of disadvantaged pupils were entered for the English Baccalaureate than that of all pupils nationally, for example.
- Inspection evidence confirms that these examination results are as a result of pupils making substantial and sustained progress across all year groups. Teachers and leaders are highly attuned to the needs of individual pupils. Any pupil that is not making the progress, of which they are capable is identified and supported in their learning.
- Pupils with SEND receive helpful and effective support. Teachers plan well for the specific needs of pupils with an education, health and care plan. In addition, pupils attached to the specially resourced provision, which supports pupils with additional needs relating to speech, language and communication, are well served. As a result of the support that pupils with SEND receive, the progress that they make is very strong.
- The needs of most-able pupils are also well met. Teachers plan lessons that ensure that subject content is both interesting and stretching for these pupils. These pupils develop a keen sense of independence and ownership of their learning.
- Pupils are encouraged to read widely. They enjoy reading for pleasure. Many find additional reading material to support their academic studies. Pupils who struggle with

reading are given effective additional support, including by peer mentors and sixth-form students. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive bespoke support to help to develop their reading skills. This, too, is effective.

- A small number of pupils study some of their subjects with outside providers. The progress that these pupils make is strikingly strong. School leaders are highly tenacious in ensuring that these pupils continue with their diet of academic programmes in addition to developing vocational skills. In 2018, the progress that these pupils made across the curriculum was stronger than the national average for all pupils.
- Inspectors saw, first-hand, the quality of work being produced in art, music and physical education. Inspectors also noted the high quality of written work in history and psychology. Right across the curriculum, pupils make excellent progress.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- School leaders have successfully improved provision in the sixth form. Historically, students made less progress in the sixth form compared to pupils in key stages 3 and 4. This is no longer the case. Following the last inspection, the headteacher added capacity to the leadership of the sixth form. The additional support and leadership have had a positive impact on the quality of provision.
- Systems to check the progress that individual students are making and the standards that they are reaching are now more precise. In addition, there is now an effective programme of intervention and support for students who are at risk of underachievement. Similarly, student absence is checked more rigorously. Rates of attendance have improved as a result.
- Student achievement is outstanding. They reach high levels of attainment. Students have high expectations of themselves. They apply for courses which interest them, but that also show how ambitious they are. Due to high-quality advice and guidance on transition into the sixth form, the vast majority of students choose to study courses that are relevant to their career aspirations and match their abilities. Very few do not complete their chosen courses.
- Current students are making outstanding progress from their starting points. School leaders accept that there is still some variation between subjects, however.
- The curriculum in the sixth form offers students support in applying to university or moving into employment. Of note is the high-quality enhancement programme and the personal and social education courses on offer. These complement the academic programmes that students are following. They help them to understand the challenges of adulthood in addition to preparing them for life after school. Students also have access to a well-considered work experience programme. The sixth-form offer is compliant with the requirements of 16 to 19 study programmes.
- Students in the sixth form say that they are well supported pastorally and that they feel safe. They too, appreciate the focus of school leaders in ensuring the positive mental health of students in the sixth form. Students are committed to their own studies, yet they also support younger pupils by acting as peer mentors and supporting the junior leadership team. They are excellent role models around school.

- Students identified teaching as the strength of the sixth form. Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent. They relate knowledge and skills to examination specifications extremely well, maintain students' motivation and stimulate their curiosity.
- As a result of high-quality teaching and the broader experiences to which they are exposed, students are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment.

School details

Unique reference number	108057
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10053758

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,400
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	312
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Illingworth
Headteacher	Elaine Silson
Telephone number	0113 2034770
Website	www.allertonhigh.org.uk
Email address	info@allertonhigh.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 February 2018

Information about this school

- Allerton High School is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- A greater proportion of pupils than average speak English as an additional language.
- There is a specially resourced provision on the site which caters for pupils who have additional needs relating to speech, language and communication.

- The school works in collaboration with outside providers as part of the curriculum on offer for pupils. At the time of the inspection, these were: Aspire and Achieve; the Pupil Enhancement Project; NACRO; AIM Education; Southway; the Reconciliation Project; Music and Arts Programme; North West Area Inclusion Programme; Leeds College of Building and the Hunslet Club.
- The headteacher is a local leader of education. She works with the Yorkshire Teaching School Alliance, providing support for other schools, focusing on the use of the pupil premium and leadership development, among other areas of school life.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning and groups of pupils working in all key stages at school. Inspectors observed learning jointly with the deputy headteacher and discussed what was seen. Learning in the sixth form was also observed.
- Inspectors observed pupils when moving around the school and at social times. They talked to pupils in lessons about their experience at school and looked at work in their books. They talked to five specific groups of pupils and sixth-form students to hear their views about the school and about the behaviour of other pupils. In addition, inspectors spoke to pupils at social times to listen to their views.
- Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body and school staff, including senior and middle leaders. Inspectors met with colleagues with responsibility for the sixth form, and those with responsibility for safeguarding. An inspector spoke with two officers from the local authority, including one with oversight of safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the 60 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 162 responses to Ofsted’s online parent questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors spoke to individual parents when this was requested.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and scrutinised a range of documentation, including: the school’s view of its own performance; monitoring records; information about pupils’ progress; improvement planning and records of behaviour and attendance. Inspectors also considered information about the progress that students are making in the sixth form.
- Inspectors looked closely at records relating to safeguarding and child protection, and at the effectiveness of protocols and procedures.

Inspection team

Michael Wardle, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
David Pridding	Ofsted Inspector
Kate Lounds	Ofsted Inspector
Louise Greatrex	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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