

XP School

Middle Bank, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN4 5NG

Inspection dates

12–13 July 2017

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher leads the school with vision and an absolute conviction that all pupils can and will succeed. He has developed and leads a strong team of staff who all share this view. Staff morale is very high.
- Pupils love their school. They attend well and enjoy learning. They appreciate the hard work and thought that goes into the work and the experiences staff plan for them.
- Pupils are impeccably behaved. They are kind, generous-spirited and aware of the needs of others, both at school and beyond. They are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school and the positive impact it is having on their children's intellectual progress and moral well-being.
- Pupils' personal development and well-being are very well supported and pupils are taught to be considerate, kind and confident.
- The school building is a very attractive and exciting place in which to learn. Pupils respect their environment and are proud of their high-quality work on the walls of the school.
- The school's administrative systems are reliable and of very high quality. They support teaching and learning effectively.
- The school offers its pupils a varied and interesting curriculum that is expertly and imaginatively taught by staff who are constantly seeking to improve.
- Teachers and learning coaches check pupils' progress regularly and rigorously so that teaching is carefully focused on what pupils need to do to make rapid progress.
- Leaders make sure that safeguarding arrangements are effective and that all the necessary procedures are in place and rigorously applied. Pupils feel safe. All staff are carefully and regularly trained to keep them up to date in how to keep pupils safe.
- Governors use their detailed knowledge of the school and of its checking systems to challenge leaders rigorously to ensure continued outstanding progress.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is very well led. These pupils make excellent progress. This is because their needs are accurately identified and teaching is adapted so that they make the best progress possible.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further extend pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding as the school grows to capacity and pupils move towards examinations at the end of key stage 4.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders are driven by the conviction that everyone can and should do well. They work in partnership with parents, governors and the team of staff to make this happen.
- Leaders have an approach to understanding and learning about the world that is rooted in kindness, rigour and integrity. It prepares pupils very well for their next steps and for life in modern Britain. This is because, through a range of very carefully planned and challenging activities, leaders and staff encourage pupils to develop intellectual resilience, a sense of moral purpose and emotional intelligence.
- Leaders and governors have created a culture of excellence at the school. This is sustained through consistent and rigorous checking systems, focused support and training and, above all, on an insistence on the highest expectations for all. The school is well served in this aspect of its work by high-quality administrative systems.
- Leaders and governors manage the performance of staff very effectively to drive up standards. Staff targets are simple yet rigorous. They are focused on improving the outcomes and well-being of pupils. The impact of staff actions on improving pupils' progress is regularly checked through conversations and a range of thorough and detailed checks and scrutiny of pupils' work. The induction process for staff new to the school is very detailed and effective.
- XP staff are constantly seeking to improve. Led by the headteacher, there is constant discussion about how best to refine and focus teaching and learning so that all pupils do well. Staff work well together and are robust in their assessment of each other's work. Staff at the school collaborate closely with other schools to check and improve the accuracy of assessments. As a result of this determination to improve, pupils make excellent progress. Staff morale is very high.
- The curriculum at the school is broad, balanced and interesting. It is underpinned by a very wide range of extra-curricular clubs and sports opportunities that are open to all. Pupils enjoy and gain much from the range and variety of their experiences in learning. They also welcome the opportunities they are offered to develop as leaders and organisers of charity and other events.
- Subject leaders are very effective. They work very closely together to identify common areas for further training to develop staff expertise. For example, they have identified common strands in both mathematics and the sciences where even more can be done to raise pupils' mathematical expertise in a range of subjects across the curriculum.
- Pupil premium funding is used very expertly by leaders and governors to ensure that barriers to learning are, as far as possible, removed. As a result, disadvantaged pupils do as well, if not better, than their peers at the school. The additional funding for Year 7 pupils who have not reached the expected standard by the time they start secondary school is also very well used. As a result of the school's careful deployment of this funding and the very thorough systems that are in place to check its impact, pupils catch up very rapidly.
- The school is very effective in developing pupils' understanding of themselves as spiritual beings working within a moral framework. The school offers many

opportunities for pupils to develop this sense of self in the service of others whether through voluntary and charity work or during regular times of reflection with their crew/tutor teams.

- Leaders have ensured that the school is a very attractive place to work in. The environment is very conducive to learning, with examples of pupils' high-quality work and striking art. Pupils are very proud of their school and take care of it.
- Parents hold the school and its leadership in very high regard. In their texts to inspectors, parents particularly commented on the expertise and commitment of staff to their children's learning and safety. As one of many parents who commented positively said, 'XP is fantastic. They treat each crew member [pupil] as an individual and cater to their individual needs. They work as a team and do things together as crew to build relationships and conquer problems and fears, helping everyone to grow.'
- Parents are provided with clear, regular and detailed accounts of their children's progress. There is almost 100% attendance at pupils' progress evenings and events. Pupils lead the discussion of their work and progress during these sessions.

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school is dynamic, strategic and detailed. Governors are committed to improving their skills through regular training. They visit the school regularly to support and check its work. As a result, they are able to ask challenging questions of leaders in order to ensure that the school maintains and further develops its high standards.
- The trust and governors oversee the financial management of the school appropriately. For example, they guarantee that the pupil premium funding, the additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the additional Year 7 funding are spent well. Consequently, governors meet their financial obligations.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. A culture of safeguarding pervades the school. Leaders and governors see safeguarding as their paramount responsibility. Members of staff receive regular safeguarding training to make sure that this priority remains at the forefront of the school's work.
- All staff know all the pupils very well. As a result, pupils are surrounded by trusted adults to whom they can turn to for help. Staff communicate and meet with parents regularly on matters to do with their children's safety and well-being. Parents welcome this. They speak very highly of the lengths the school goes to in order to ensure that their children are safe.
- The school's systems and checks are rigorous, systematically maintained and checked, and regularly scrutinised by governors. There are robust procedures in place for the recording and reporting of any concerns that arise.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers and learning coaches have consistently high expectations and display excellent subject knowledge. They are determined that all pupils will do well. They energise pupils with their knowledge and genuine engagement with learning. Pupils rise enthusiastically and successfully to this challenge.
- Relationships among pupils and between staff and pupils are appropriately relaxed and friendly. Pupils enjoy the challenge of the classroom.
- Leaders and staff have established very clear and effective learning routines and a culture of enquiry in each class and across the school. These routines are rooted in the school's ethos of high expectations, care and challenge. As a result, pupils are very clear about what is expected of them. They question themselves and each other rigorously but humanely.
- Staff display very well developed and incisive questioning skills that help pupils explore and challenge their learning and assumptions. This has a very positive impact on pupils' pleasure and success in learning.
- Staff, led by the headteacher, seek innovative and exciting ways to extend learning further. They plan work very carefully together, seeking opportunities to extend and deepen pupils' learning and skills through interesting and stimulating activities. This approach encourages thinking and the further development of key skills, such as team work and questioning. Learning activities often involve fieldwork and a tangible product. Through these opportunities, pupils develop confidence, knowledge, skills and resilience.
- The teaching of mathematics is excellent. Pupils enjoy the many opportunities that staff give them to deepen their mathematical thinking through 'open-ended' enquiry that requires the mastery of a wide range of mathematical skills. Pupils' joy in exploring mathematics, especially that of the most able, is shown in the enthusiasm with which they speak about mathematics.
- Pupils have many opportunities to write in different styles to suit a wide range of purposes. They thoroughly enjoy this. They write to develop their ideas and to explore and deepen their learning. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to write at length in the full range of subjects, including in religious education and the sciences.
- Staff very regularly check on the progress that pupils are making to gauge how well they are doing, identify who may be falling behind and to help inform next steps in teaching and learning. Staff assure the accuracy of their assessments by sharing and regularly testing their judgements with other members of staff. In addition, the school has strong links with the local teaching alliance, Partners in Learning. Colleagues from this partnership regularly meet with staff to check the accuracy of their assessments. As a result of these stringent processes, the school's assessments of pupils' progress are accurate. This is borne out by inspection evidence.
- The whole-school policy for teachers' feedback to pupils is very effective and followed by all staff. It helps ensure that all pupils, including the most able, are making sure and rapid progress and teachers can act swiftly and effectively if progress falters.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. The school creates a secure environment where pupils are able to thrive and learn.
- Pupils are relaxed, confident and self-assured learners. They have excellent attitudes to learning and have a clear sense of where their learning is going. They are kind and very sensitive to the needs of others.
- Pupils show significant respect for others' views but they are also not afraid to take a stand if they see inappropriate or ill-considered views being expounded. They have regular opportunities to discuss and reflect on their learning, progress and attitudes. For example, inspectors saw a very measured and focused discussion about the nature and importance of compassion in both the school community and the wider world by a group of Year 7 pupils.
- Pupils are carefully, imaginatively and very well supported by the school in making choices about next steps in their learning. For example, in readiness for Year 9 and GCSE choices, pupils prepare, and then present to their parents and peers, a detailed set of reasons and reflections about why they are ready for this next step. Year 9 pupils report that this process was very challenging, but also very rewarding.
- Pupils report that there is no bullying at the school. Inspection findings show that incidents of bullying are very rare. Pupils are very clear about the forms that bullying can take. They said that if they felt unhappy or bullied, they would tell an adult at the school. Pupils reported that they were very confident that staff would 'sort it out'.
- Pupils are extremely well informed about how to keep themselves safe at school and when out and about in the community. They also know how to keep safe online. This is because the school runs regular, carefully planned, sessions, often including outside speakers, to help ensure that pupils are well equipped to deal with the increasingly complex world they inhabit.
- Pupils who, from time to time, need additional support are very well cared for and supported by the school. Leaders have put in place very rigorous systems, rooted in clear moral purpose, to help ensure that any barriers to the learning and well-being of pupils are overcome.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves healthy and adopt healthy life styles. School meals are nutritious and well balanced. Pupils are well aware of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and as they move around the school is impeccable. They are very aware of the needs of others and clear about the positive impact of minor acts of kindness. As one pupil said during a discussion session, 'Holding a door open for someone may be a small thing, but it can make their day.'

- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. All pupils want to learn and improve because of the dedicated teaching, care and challenge they receive from staff at the school.
- Leaders have ensured that all pupils have very well developed strategies for reviewing their own and other pupils' work and attitudes to assure continuous and thoughtful improvement. These strategies are rooted in clear, fully shared values. For example, when reviewing another pupil's work, pupils told inspectors that it is important to ensure that it is the work that is being 'critiqued' and not the person.
- Pupils say that they love coming to school. The school has very rigorous and effective systems and strategies to encourage and ensure pupils' regular attendance. Attendance is above the national average.
- Throughout the school, pupils talk with real engagement and enthusiasm about their learning and how much they enjoy and take pride in it.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Inspection evidence shows that throughout each year group and across all subjects, including English and mathematics, pupils make sustained and substantial progress from their starting points. This is because they are taught extremely effectively and are eager to learn. They are making outstanding progress.
- Pupils' notebooks and portfolios are a credit to their efforts and to the high expectations of staff. These extensive records of pupils' work show them thinking deeply and reflecting carefully on what they have learned across a wide range of subjects. There is evidence of pupils writing accurately and at length in a range of subjects using appropriate subject-specific language. Pupils are responsible for the upkeep of these key records. They are, generally, very well presented.
- The school rigorously checks on the accuracy of its assessments of pupils' work and progress through regular moderation meetings across the school and with the local teaching alliance, Partners in Learning.
- Disadvantaged pupils do well and often better than their peers. This is because staff and leaders know these pupils very well. They use this very detailed knowledge to remove barriers to learning and progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make excellent progress from their starting points. The school's provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is very well led. Staff focus their support very carefully. This is because staff and leaders use their detailed knowledge about pupils to shape their teaching to suit these pupils' needs. The additional funding provided for this aspect of the school's work is very effectively spent.
- The most able pupils also do very well. The open-ended nature of the work pupils do and their eagerness to succeed, combined with high levels of staff challenge, mean that there is no 'ceiling' to the standards that pupils can reach. A group of most-able Year 9 pupils spoke to inspectors with real enthusiasm about their study of three sciences and the ways it could enable them to follow routes to become doctors or vets.
- Reading is a significant strength of the school. Pupils are expertly taught by staff across the school to read both for a particular purpose and for pleasure. Pupils have

regular opportunities to read and to discuss and develop their reading. This instils in pupils a thirst for books.

- Over 90% of pupils achieve the bronze Duke of Edinburgh award by the end of Year 9.
- The school prepares pupils very effectively for their next steps. For example, in Year 9, there is a piece of work that encourages pupils to think carefully about who they want to be when they are 28 years old. They use the discussion and research that stems from this reflection to map out two routes to this destination. They think very carefully and explore what they will need at key times as they make this journey into the future. Year 9 pupils report that they thoroughly enjoyed this approach because it made them think carefully about the consequences of the decisions they make.

School details

Unique reference number	140964
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10031926

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	150
Appropriate authority	The academy trust
Chair	Steve Bielby
Headteacher	Andy Sprakes
Telephone number	01302 898792
Website	www.xpschool.org
Email address	info@xptrust.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- XP opened in 2014 and, at present, has 50 pupils in each of Years 7, 8 and 9. It will grow to full capacity over the next four years to become an 11 to 19 school.
- XP East, another free school in the trust, is due to open for 50 Year 7 pupils in September 2017. It is under construction on an adjacent site. This new school building will be completed by September 2018. Year 7 XP East pupils will be accommodated in the XP building from September 2017.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school is part of the XP School Trust.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much smaller than the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities supported by the school is slightly below average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plan is well above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is slightly above average.
- The school works closely with the local teaching alliance, Partners in Learning, to help assure the accuracy of its assessments of pupils' work and progress.
- The school works with the Dearne Valley Personal Development Centre to provide additional support for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited all classes and saw all staff teach. In three of these visits they were accompanied by members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors talked with pupils in lessons and around the school. They also spent time scrutinising a significant sample of pupils' work from across the curriculum. They listened to pupils read in Years 7 and 8. They also spoke more formally with pupils from Years 7 and 9 to explore their attitudes to learning and safety. The lead inspector also met with a group of Year 9 pupils to discuss the effectiveness of the support they receive as they start their GCSE courses.
- The inspectors met regularly with the senior team, including the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the chief executive officer. They met with the whole staff and with members of the trust and governing body, including the chair. They took into account 26 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire. Inspectors also met with subject leaders and a group of support staff (learning coaches).
- Inspectors took into account the 49 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. They also took into account the results of the school's own surveys of parental satisfaction and the 45 free-text responses from parents.
- The inspectors scrutinised documents, including minutes of governing body meetings, the school's self-evaluation, the development plan, monitoring and assessment information, school policies, behaviour and safety records, safeguarding policies and procedures, and the record of security checks on staff.

Inspection team

Mark Evans, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Graham Crerar

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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Manchester
M1 2WD

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