

Inspection of Bradford Academy

Teasdale Street, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD4 7QJ

Inspection dates:	29 and 30 April 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Melanie Saville. This school is the only school in a single academy trust, which means the board of trustees also has responsibility for running the school. This board is chaired by Adrian Farley.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel valued and happy in this inclusive school. It welcomes pupils with a wide range of backgrounds and beliefs. Staff and pupils are rightly proud of the improvements since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy a rich, carefully designed curriculum. The school adjusts the curriculum to meet pupils' individual needs and aspirations. This helps pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to access fully what the school offers. Pupils with SEND thrive alongside their peers at every stage of education.

Outcomes in external assessments are significantly stronger in the primary phase. However, in 2024, Year 11 exams results were below national expectations because these pupils did not benefit fully from the curriculum changes. The school has high expectations for pupils' academic success. Ongoing improvements in pupils' current performance in all phases are clear.

Pupils' behaviour is commendable. Pupils are polite and respectful. They show a genuine curiosity to learn. The school's proactive approach to managing behaviour has reduced disruptions in lessons, creating a calm and supportive learning space.

Students in the sixth form value the individual support provided. They join peers from other year groups in various enrichment activities. These include sports, overseas travel and social initiatives that help others.

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

Reading is a central part of learning at the school. From the age of two, children have access to a wide range of books that nurture their love of learning. The school provides a varied selection of texts from many different genres and authors. Staff update the reading choices regularly to ensure pupils have fresh reading material. Pupils look forward to the new reads. The school also encourages parents to read with their children, particularly in the early years. This fosters a love for books and storytelling.

Across all year groups, staff encourage pupils to read every day in subjects and topics that interest them. Younger pupils look forward to reading with adults and exploring stories that staff share. Pupils also discuss enthusiastically with their friends the different stories and authors they discover. Staff deliver the school's phonics programme expertly. They help pupils learn new sounds and read words using their phonics knowledge and reading skills. For those who find reading difficult, help is available to assist them promptly. This means that these pupils catch up with their friends in a short amount of time.

The school's curriculum ensures that pupils learn the important knowledge in many subjects. Both staff and pupils understand how the curriculum helps build knowledge sequentially. However, at times, teachers' approaches differ from what leaders expect. This creates uneven opportunities for pupils to learn the knowledge in the curriculum. As a result, pupils do not learn and achieve as well as they should.

Children in the early years are curious learners. Staff skilfully help them explore and develop their ideas in both the inside and outside spaces. This exploration sparks talking and helps children learn more about the world around them. Teachers cover various topics at different times, keeping the learning fresh and exciting. For example, the bug hunt helps children build on the knowledge they have gained in a fun and practical way.

The school works well to ensure that pupils with SEND succeed in their learning. Part of this includes on-site provision for SEND pupils. This resource is key to creating an inclusive learning space. Pupils who attend the provision transition smoothly into the main school community. They share social interactions and lessons with their peers and achieve well.

Pupils behave well in classrooms and around school. Staff and pupils agree that behaviour has improved dramatically in recent times. The school makes sure all pupils' learning is uninterrupted and provides effective support for any pupils who struggle. The school has introduced a range of strategies to improve pupils' attendance. Nevertheless, some pupils continue to miss too many days of school, especially in specific year groups. This means that these pupils miss out on vital learning.

Pupils experience an exciting extracurricular programme. It includes being part of the choir and sports teams and visits to many places. Pupils learn and apply British values in 'school elections' and when welcoming guests. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The school's careers programme is ambitious and well considered. Pupils understand their options as they contemplate their future education and careers.

In the sixth form, students continue to develop and learn in a manner that suits their age. They enjoy their studies and receive support from a caring team of adults. The school ensures that sixth-form classes are open to all students. Everyone, no matter their ability, enjoys valuable learning experiences. For example, students pursue level 2 qualifications that lead to level 3 courses where suitable.

The school's governors are skilled and knowledgeable. They work effectively to support the school and ask important questions to improve the quality of education provided. Staff value and appreciate the school's commitment to their workload and well-being. They enjoy working at the school. Leaders, staff and governors make sure their actions and decisions match the school's core values: responsibility, respect and resilience.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Aspects of planned curriculum content are not consistently delivered to a high standard. This means most pupils do not entirely understand this content. The trust

should quickly ensure that all aspects of the taught subject curriculums are delivered effectively, including in key stage 3 and 4, so pupils acquire the essential knowledge identified in curriculum plans.

- Notwithstanding the improvements in pupil attendance, many pupils are absent too regularly from school. This means that these pupils miss out on vital school experiences and have key gaps in their knowledge. The trust should continue to strengthen its attendance strategy and work with pupils and their families to improve attendance so that pupils benefit from the learning offer provided.

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	135367
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	10379370
Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,686
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	108
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Adrian Farley
Principal	Melanie Saville
Website	www.bradfordacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 January 2023, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school currently uses nine unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with trustees.
- Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding, personal development, careers, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: Early reading, English, mathematics, science, history and health and social care. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information regarding behaviour. Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils at social times.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and staff formally and informally throughout the inspection. Responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff, pupils and parents were considered by the inspection team.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.

Inspection team

Richard Jones, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Natasha Greenough	Ofsted Inspector
Erica Hiorns	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Smit	Ofsted Inspector
Lynda Florence	Ofsted Inspector
Christina Jones	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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