

Inspection of Huxlow Academy

Finedon Road, Irthlingborough, Northamptonshire NN9 5TY

Inspection dates:	20 and 21 May 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Kim Isaksen. This school is part of Tove Learning 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), Jamie Clarke, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Christopher Watt.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has transformed pupils' experiences of school so that they have more opportunities to be successful. Pupils learn in purposeful classroom environments and work with staff who are highly ambitious about what they can achieve. The quality of education provided by the school has recently improved. However, the curriculum is not taught consistently well, and pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

The school has ensured that pupils understand the 'Huxlow way' and demonstrate pride, ambition and respect. The vast majority of pupils behave well, say that they feel safe and have a trusted adult who they can turn to, should they have any concerns.

Pupils take on leadership roles as sports leaders and form representatives. They take pride in contributing to the school community and sharing their ideas. The school listens to pupils and makes adjustments, including to significant aspects of school life, such as to the behaviour and rewards policy. These changes benefit pupils. Some parents and carers recognise the recent positive changes that the school and the trust have brought about. The school has increased its communication with parents but there remain some who would appreciate further improvement in their children's experience of school.

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious in almost all subjects. Where this is not the case, the school has redesigned the curriculum for the next academic year to ensure that it is sufficiently ambitious. The curriculum is well designed in that it sets out what pupils should learn and when. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and, generally, their explanations of important knowledge are clear and helpful to pupils. There are inconsistencies in how well the school checks pupils' understanding. When these checks are not careful enough, gaps in some pupils' knowledge are not identified and addressed. Pupils do not consistently benefit from support or increasingly demanding work at the most appropriate points. They do not routinely receive purposeful guidance about how to get better. As a result, some pupils do not learn and remember the curriculum as well as they could.

Sixth-form students develop secure subject knowledge. Teachers check students' understanding thoroughly and provide them with helpful guidance about how to improve their work. They consistently provide work that enables students to build on prior learning.

Teachers identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. The school has ensured that pupils are looked after well in relation to their social and emotional needs. Teachers receive helpful information about the needs of the pupils with SEND that they teach. However, this information is not used consistently well. Sometimes, learning opportunities are not adapted as well as they could be to enable pupils with SEND to access the curriculum successfully.

The school has recently prioritised reading. Pupils who need extra support do receive help, but the support has, until recently, been inconsistent in its impact. As a result, some of these pupils have not developed the fluency and accuracy of their reading as well as they should have.

The school has helped pupils to improve their behaviour dramatically. Pupils learn in calm and purposeful classrooms. They appreciate the recognition they receive for behaving well. There are clear and effective systems in place to support pupils when they have made the wrong choice. However, for some pupils, staff have not ensured that the high expectations of behaviour are consistently met. As a result, pupils occasionally see and hear disrespectful behaviour.

Pupils' attendance has improved, and most pupils attend well. The school analyses carefully the reasons for pupils' absence and uses a range of strategies to successfully remove the barriers to pupils attending school.

The school caters well for pupils' personal development. Pupils develop an understanding of fundamental British values and are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The school's 'ethos team' provides pupils with tailored learning that boosts their self-esteem and develops their understanding of healthy relationships. Pupils respect people from different cultures and backgrounds. Students in the sixth form develop an understanding of healthy relationships. They speak highly of the pastoral support they receive. Pupils receive useful information about careers opportunities. Sixth-form students, in particular, are well prepared to make decisions about their lives beyond school.

The school and the trust identify priorities for improvement accurately and promptly. They take action and review the impact of those actions. In this way, leaders have brought about rapid improvement in the quality of the school's provision. Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the consideration given to their workload and feel listened to.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not consistently check pupils' knowledge well enough. Pupils do not routinely benefit from high-quality advice and feedback. This can lead to gaps in pupils' knowledge and pupils not achieving as highly as they should. The school should ensure that there are effective strategies in place to check pupils' knowledge over time and in lessons so that any gaps or misconceptions are identified and addressed. The school should ensure that pupils receive the guidance they need to achieve well.

- Sometimes, the school does not ensure that teaching is adapted well enough so that pupils can access the curriculum. This means that, on these occasions, pupils with SEND who require particular adaptations to be made, or pupils who need extra support to build effectively on their prior learning, do not receive the learning opportunities that they need. The school should ensure that information about pupils' needs is used consistently well so that pupils receive the support they need to progress through the curriculum.
- On occasion, the school does not ensure that its high expectations of behaviour are maintained. This means that there are times when pupils see and hear disrespectful behaviour. The school should ensure that pupils are supported consistently well to make the right choices and to be respectful at all times.

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	149433
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10379618
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	827
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	87
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christopher Watt
CEO of the trust	Jamie Clarke
Headteacher	Kim Isaksen
Website	www.huxlow.northants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Huxlow Academy joined the Tove Learning Trust in September 2022. When its predecessor school, Huxlow Science College, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate for overall effectiveness.
- The headteacher took up her post in June 2024. The two deputy headteachers began working at the school in September 2024.
- The school currently uses three registered and two unregistered alternative providers.
- 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.
- 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, other senior leaders, subject leaders, staff, the CEO, other trust representatives, the chair of trustees and the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science, physical education and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for pupils' behaviour, attendance and personal development. They also met with leaders responsible for the provision for pupils with SEND, the provision for disadvantaged pupils and alternative provision.
- Inspectors met with the leader responsible for provision in the sixth form, visited sixth-form lessons and met with groups of sixth-form students.
- Inspectors met formally and informally with groups of pupils.
- 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.
- Inspectors considered responses received via Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. They also considered responses to the Ofsted surveys for school staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Matthew Fearn-Davies, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Karen Hayes	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Davies	Ofsted Inspector
Jonathan Ferstenberg	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 2025