

Inspection of XP Gateshead

Swards Road, Felling NE10 9UZ

Inspection dates:	15 and 16 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The principal of this school is Julie Mosley. This school is part of XP School Trust Limited, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Gwyn ap Harri, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Stephen Bielby.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy an exciting educational experience at XP Gateshead. Through expeditions, they connect learning across a range of subjects. Every pupil is part of a 'crew'. Pupils describe how this supports their sense of belonging. Pupils are safe and flourish socially in this tight-knit community.

Pupils learn a broad and ambitious curriculum. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well. This is evident in the high-quality work that pupils produce. Pupils also create final products in their expeditions. They present these to a wider, external audience, developing self-confidence and pride in their achievements. Pupils experience success by publishing and sharing their work through an extensive variety of outside platforms. This connects their learning to their community and the wider world.

XP Gateshead aims to bring learning to life. Pupils take part in extensive fieldwork opportunities. Every Year 7 pupil begins their XP journey with an outward-bound adventure. Pupils passionately share memories of this experience. They express how it helps them and forms lasting friendships. Pupils also begin to develop the valued XP character traits. The school then expertly builds upon this over time. There is an exemplary focus on personal development. This means pupils display excellent attitudes towards their learning and each other.

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

XP Gateshead has high expectations for what pupils can achieve. The unique expeditionary curriculum is rich with challenging texts. Due to the cross-curricular approach, pupils develop a deep understanding about the contexts of these texts. In addition, staff expressly teach pupils how to develop their spoken language skills. Pupils understand the importance of articulating their thoughts in well-developed sentences. They also know how to respectfully build on the ideas of others. For example, Year 8 pupils learn about what it means to be human. As part of this, they read the play 'Noughts and Crosses'. They articulately discuss the significant effect of systemic racism. Pupils' writing development has not been as expertly considered and sequenced as other aspects of their work. The steps pupils should follow to keep improving are not as clear as they are in other curriculum areas. As a result, there is some variation in the depth of pupils' understanding about how to write in more sophisticated ways.

Crew sessions start pupils' day. These small-group sessions are meticulously planned to prepare pupils for their next steps. Sessions do this in numerous effective ways. One aspect is 'crew read'. Here, staff model fluency and expression when reading aloud. Pupils also explore the key themes and ideas in the books they read. This helps them to understand and celebrate difference in society, enhancing their wider personal development. Swift identification highlights pupils who need support with reading. Trained staff deliver small-group reading support. This support helps pupils to access the curriculum with confidence.

The way the school builds a culture of positive behaviour is exceptional. Staff use deliberate and thoughtful strategies to enable pupils to thrive as individuals and as part of a team. Weekly 'community meetings' take place, where pupils challenge and support each other. They do this through apologies, appreciations and making stands. These meetings help pupils to celebrate success and resolve any disagreements. Pupils' mature and empathetic attitudes in these sessions are impressive. They are confident speaking in front of each other. Pupils' respectful attitudes are a significant reason the school is a happy place to be. Staff reinforce positive attitudes in a highly effective way. The school embeds 'HOWLS' (habits of work and learning) throughout the day. Staff identify and celebrate when pupils are working hard, getting smart or being kind. In crew, pupils review each other's 'HOWLS' as a critical friend. Pupils talk about how they are accountable for their behaviour and learning. This prepares them well for life beyond the school gates.

Leaders, including directors and governors, share a clear and ambitious vision for the school. They commit to providing a rounded education that helps pupils become better people. Leaders forge positive links in the local community. Relationships with businesses enhance a growing and effective careers provision in school. Staff enjoy working at the school. Collaborative planning time and staff days help them manage their workload more effectively. Parents are highly positive about the education and wider experiences their children receive. Many comment on the passionate staff and how everyone leads by example.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The key knowledge that pupils need to learn and master to fully develop their writing has not been clearly identified. As a result, there is variation in how well pupils understand how to craft and improve their writing in different contexts. The school should continue to refine the writing curriculum so that pupils are able to write with sophistication for varied purposes across different 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.

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	148617
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10297551
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	199
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stephen Bielby
CEO of the trust	Gwyn ap Harri
Principal	Julie Mosley
Website	www.xpgateshead.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- XP Gateshead opened in September 2021. It is part of XP School Trust Limited.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school opened in September 2021 and currently has pupils in Years 7 to Year 10.
- 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, deputy headteacher and other leaders from the trust over the course of the inspection. The lead inspector also met with the chief executive officer and chief academic officer of the trust.
- The lead inspector met with a director of the board of trustees. An inspector also met with members of the local governing committee. Inspectors reviewed documentation relating to governance, including minutes from governor meetings.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, science and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector also discussed the art curriculum with the class teacher and looked at a sample of pupils' work in this subject.
- The inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator. They also reviewed documentation relating to SEND.
- The lead inspector met with the leader responsible for personal development.
- The lead inspector also evaluated provision for reading in the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.
- The inspectors met with groups of pupils formally throughout the inspection and spoke with them informally at social times and in lessons.
- A range of school documents was reviewed, including the school's self-evaluation and the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

Hannah Millett, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Geoff Lumsdon

Ofsted Inspector

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