

# Ackton Pastures Primary School

College Road, Castleford, West Yorkshire WF10 5NS

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| <b>Inspection dates</b>                      | 29–30 June 2016      |
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>                 | <b>Good</b>          |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management   | Good                 |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good                 |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare  | Good                 |
| Outcomes for pupils                          | Good                 |
| Early years provision                        | Good                 |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The principal, ably supported by senior leaders and a well-informed governing body, has set high expectations of pupils and staff. As a result, school improvement has been sustained and rapid.
- The school has benefited from the federation arrangements that have provided additional leadership expertise and learning support.
- Leaders have rightly focused efforts on improving the quality of teaching. They have addressed the issues identified in the previous inspection and teaching is now good.
- Progress is accelerating for all groups of pupils and funding to support disadvantaged pupils is targeted effectively. Consequently these pupils are gaining lost ground.
- Teachers make effective use of assessment information to plan next steps in learning. Pupils respond well to constructive feedback about their work.
- Pupils are keen to learn and participate in learning. As a result, lessons proceed smoothly and time is used well.
- Children get off to a flying start in their education because the early years provision offers a secure and stimulating setting.
- Pupils' writing is a real strength.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A significant proportion of pupils are not yet confident in speaking aloud in front of others.
- The quality of presentation in work across subjects does not match the standards seen in English and mathematics.
- Subject leaders' roles are at an early stage of development and subject leaders have yet to maximise their impact on standards.
- Pupils do not apply their mathematics skills across different subjects, especially in science.
- There are limited opportunities for children in the early years to develop their imagination and curiosity through investigative challenges.
- The work to promote understanding of fundamental British values is not yet fully developed.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Support pupils in becoming more confident in speaking by:
  - increasing the range and frequency of opportunities for pupils to speak aloud for a variety of purposes
  - broadening pupils' understanding and use of wider vocabulary and expression
  - promoting good models of speech at all times
  - building further on existing good practice in improving early speech and language skills.
- Raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - ensuring that the presentation of work in all subjects matches that seen in English and mathematics
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply mathematical skills across a wide range of subjects, especially science.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The principal and senior leaders have communicated strong ambition for the school. They have clarified what is expected of staff and are uncompromising in their pursuit of high standards. Staff have responded positively as a team, are committed to improve their practice further and are proud to be part of a rapidly improving school.
- Leaders have organised a coherent package of training and coaching for staff that has been delivered over the school year. They have made effective use of external consultants, high-calibre local authority guidance and their own expertise. This programme of support, coupled with strong and consistent expectations, has resulted in significant improvement in the quality of teaching.
- Arrangements for the management of performance are extremely well developed. Thorough checks on the quality of teaching are timely and supportive. Leaders ensure that appraisal focuses tightly on accelerating pupils' progress and are confident in addressing areas for improvement with individual staff.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's performance. They have made sure that issues identified from the last inspection have been addressed successfully. As a result of well thought out actions, the standard of teaching is now consistently good, standards are rising and all groups of pupils, including the most able and those who are disadvantaged, are making much better progress.
- The lively curriculum is enriched beyond the classroom. Staff provide exciting learning stimuli through special events, visitors or visits locally and further afield. The youngest children, for example, recently visited the Rainbow Factory in Leeds to spark their imagination about fantasy stories, while a residential visit to London for older pupils provided a wealth of cultural experiences.
- There is structured guidance in place to support subject leadership in physical education, science, humanities and the arts. New leaders are in post and are keen to carry out their roles, but they are yet to demonstrate a significant impact on the quality of work in those areas.
- The federated arrangements with Half Acres Primary School have been instrumental in supporting the pace of improvement. When the school experienced unavoidable staff absence, the federation was able to provide additional staffing and leadership at short notice to ensure that learning did not slow down.
- Funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used well. Leaders have established systems to identify where these pupils have additional needs and have provided a range of academic and emotional support. Because of these strategies, disadvantaged pupils are making better progress.
- The additional funding for physical education and sport is also used well. Sports coaches provide additional clubs across some lunchtimes and also work alongside staff. More inter-school sports activities are now available and pupils have opportunities to tackle different sports after school.
- Leaders have established a clear behaviour code based on rewards and sanctions that pupils respect and regard as fair. Staff are supported in managing any poor behaviour and incidents are fully recorded. However, these are not yet analysed over time to provide an insight into any patterns.
- There were limited responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, but the school's own surveys of parental views confirm that parents have a positive opinion about provision.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors have a close knowledge of the school and work in a supportive but watchful manner with school leaders. Through frequent visits to school, attendance at training events and by requiring quality assurance reports, they are able to verify that senior leaders are moving the school forward.
  - Governors have wide expertise and are confident in challenging senior leaders where they feel they want to explore issues or concerns about pupils' outcomes.
  - The detailed governing body development plan provides a secure working programme that links closely to school improvement planning. Governors share the leaders' ambition and have recently made arrangements for the federation to join the Aspire Academy Trust in 2017.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Recruitment procedures reflect good practice and there are well-understood, robust systems around pupils who may be at risk of harm. The school environment is clean, tidy, safe and secure.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching is now consistently good. This is because teachers make effective use of assessment to plan next steps in learning to meet a range of needs and extend pupils' thinking. Because work is pitched at the right level and teachers explain tasks clearly, pupils quickly become engaged and sustain their concentration.
- There are high expectations around the quality and quantity of written work in English and mathematics. Pupils say that the feedback that teachers provide and the opportunities they have to edit and refine their work really help them know how to do better, especially the 'cold to gold' approach in writing. One pupil said, 'It's hard because we get thrown in at the deep end but we can see progress over the weeks.'
- Better subject knowledge has enabled teachers to drive significant improvements in writing, most notably in Year 6 where pupils produce work that is structured, well punctuated and stylish. Pupils know through the 'magic five' what features constitute good work, and teachers provide clear explanations, examples and guidance checklists.
- English leaders had identified a weakness in spelling from assessments in 2015 and introduced a consistent focus on spelling patterns across the school. This has improved accuracy in written work. In the early years and in key stage 1, the teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) is generally good, but a few adults fail to articulate the sounds accurately.
- Pupils learn how to write in the cursive style from an early stage. Although some pupils find this initially challenging, handwriting is becoming more consistent in size and letter formation. There are rewards for particularly well-presented writing and good examples are celebrated through the 'Tickled Pink' display in the hall.
- Reading is taught effectively and pupils enjoy the special events such as World Book Day that promote the joy of stories. There is a good range of books available in the attractively laid-out library and pupils are inspired through fiction-based themes in English. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, pupils produced well-crafted writing after reading the book 'Skellig'.
- Teachers have quickly got to grips with the principles of the new mathematics curriculum. Frequent practice of mental and written calculation methods has helped pupils to tackle a variety of problems more confidently. They have plentiful opportunities to explain their reasoning, and teachers check on the depth of pupils' understanding when they say, 'Convince me.'
- Teachers make sure that the most able pupils are challenged in their work and these pupils feel that their work is usually at the right level. In one Year 3 mathematics lesson, one of the most able pupils took delight in solving a series of problems based on missing figures in equations, while in Year 4 a most able pupil remarked, 'This challenge is challenging!', when working on decimal place value.
- Pupils who are less confident in their learning are supported well because teachers identify where there are gaps in understanding and address these. Additional teaching on misconceptions is often provided on the same day and helps to get learning back on track.
- Work across other subjects is not always of the same high standard as in English and mathematics and in some cases lacks depth, with an overreliance on the use of worksheets.
- The school sets a range of homework that is often reflective of thematic work across the curriculum. This includes reading, spelling, mathematics challenges and termly projects such as making a Roman helmet. Some pupils and parents commented that they would like to see more homework and leaders are aware of this.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils all say that the school is getting better and it is much more organised now. They like the opportunity to do harder work and explain that the teachers help them to learn from their mistakes.
- Some younger pupils said that they would like a longer school day because they enjoy being there with their friends. Pupils feel safe around school and know that the adults look after them well.
- All groups have a good understanding about safety, and pupils in Years 3 and 4 were very clear about how to keep safe online, recalling a recent video they had watched about e-safety.

- They know that to stay healthy they need to eat 'lots of fruit and vegetables for a balanced diet' and that lack of exercise can lead to heart problems. They explained that anyone can attend clubs such as film club, choir, French or multi-sports offered after school and that they enjoy these activities.
- Bullying is rare. Pupils know about different forms of bullying and have taken part in the 'Say no to bullying' project. They have learned about the need to respect people who have different faiths and that boys and girls should be able to make choices on an equal basis.
- The work of the school in promoting an understanding about life in modern Britain is at an early stage. There are missed opportunities in the curriculum to deepen pupils' learning, for example about the way that democracy and government work or about the contribution of different cultures. Older pupils were hesitant in their knowledge of British values despite some coverage in assemblies.
- Staff responsible for safeguarding ensure that any concerns over pupils thought to be at risk are quickly followed up. All groups of staff are clear about procedures and are kept up to date through training, reviews and briefing.
- The family mentor's work is pivotal to the school's work in supporting pupils in challenging and vulnerable circumstances. She engages with families and external agencies to make sure that pupils' attendance improves and that appropriate help is provided to those with the most pressing needs.
- Staff manage the site well. They are aware of risks and are proud of the clean and attractive learning environment. 'Clean broom' awards remind pupils to keep areas and cloakrooms tidy. The school council has recently raised funds to enhance a courtyard and pupils enjoy sitting at the new, brightly coloured tables that were purchased.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They conduct themselves well in lessons and also around school. They respond well to adults and say that behaviour has got a lot better since the '3 As' (Always keep safe, keep learning, be respectful) were introduced. There are a lot of reward opportunities that promote good choices and these help to embed positive habits.
- Pupils are friendly and generally show good manners when speaking and listening to visitors. They display good learning attitudes in class and are committed to improve their work. Because pupils listen carefully and apply themselves, there is rarely a need for teachers to manage behaviour in lessons.
- At breaktimes and lunchtimes pupils enjoy being active and playing with their friends. One boy said that 'it's a happy and friendly school' and younger pupils are proud of being able to set a good example to a few older pupils whose behaviour can occasionally be boisterous.
- A small minority of pupils find it hard to manage their behaviour, but clear and consistent systems and focused support for individuals are helping them to control their emotions. There has been a significant reduction in the number of fixed-term exclusions as a result.
- Attendance has improved over time and is now in line with that seen nationally. Some pupils whose attendance was poor are now coming to school on time every day as a result of effective work with parents.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

**are good**

- Work in books and the school's own assessments across all year groups show marked progress for all groups from the start of the school year. Better teaching and improved learning attitudes have contributed to these better outcomes.
- In Year 1, pupils' phonics skills are in line with those achieved nationally and standards have been improving year on year. All the disadvantaged pupils met the phonics check in 2016. Staff are making concerted efforts to help pupils in later year groups who have struggled with reading to develop fluency and understanding.
- Most pupils read confidently and enjoy stories and non-fiction books from an early age. They enjoy selecting books from the well-stocked school library and class reading corners. Those who are behind in their reading now receive extra support in small groups and before school at the Early Bird Reading Club.
- In key stage 1, standards in 2015 were in line or above those seen typically for all subjects, and latest 2016 school assessments indicate that this trend is set to continue. The proportion of pupils meeting typical expectations is rising in all year groups and this is most consistent across key stage 1 and in lower key stage 2.

- Results in 2015 at the end of key stage 2 were below those nationally in reading and mathematics, although writing was a strength. Standards in 2016 are expected to be below national expectations, but pupils' rapid progress from low starting points means that they are gaining ground and better prepared for secondary education.
- In many year groups, pupils are producing writing that is at least typical and often better than what is expected for their age. Pupils write for a variety of purposes and take a pride in their work. Good writing is celebrated through eye-catching displays and has become a real strength of the school.
- Work in mathematics is strong and very consistent across classes. Pupils are developing a secure understanding of number because work builds well on previous learning. In a Year 1 class, pupils showed impressive speed in using doubling and halving skills to solve missing number problems.
- Although all pupils are making pleasing progress in mathematics, there are limited opportunities to apply their increasing expertise in other subjects. In science, for example, there are only a few instances where pupils apply mathematical skills of measurement, data handling and calculations.
- Most-able pupils are making good progress across all subjects because teaching is taking better account of their needs. Assessments and work observed show that a greater proportion of pupils are now working in greater depth and attaining at higher levels.
- Most-able pupils thrive on the sharper challenges provided to them in mathematics where they can go beyond routine calculations to solve a range of problems and make reasoned deductions. This was evident in a Year 6 lesson where pupils were checking temperature reports from travel brochures in Fahrenheit or Celsius to decide which parts of the world would be more attractive to sunseekers.
- Pupils for whom the school receives additional funding are making good progress in the majority of year groups across all subjects. This is most marked in Years 5 and 6 where additional support is helping pupils to catch up with their peers.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. Staff have pinpointed gaps in understanding for these pupils and although they are attaining below typical levels they are making measurable small steps in their learning. Those pupils with more complex needs are particularly well supported and are making pleasing progress in key life skills.
- Some pupils lack confidence in responding to questions or explaining their thinking in front of others. They struggle to speak clearly and are reticent about volunteering answers and this hinders their progress. In a few cases, adults do not always model good speech or articulate sounds correctly when addressing pupils.

## Early years provision

is good

- Children join the Nursery with a wide variety of abilities that are just below what are typically seen on entry. Their development moves forward well during their time in the setting, and those children whose skills are below others at the start of school, especially in speech and language, are able to catch up quickly because additional support is provided.
- Leaders and staff know the children well and, as a result of effective and accurate assessment, are able to plan and resource a range of purposeful learning activities that children enjoy. The learning journals paint a picture of good progress over time.
- The proportion of children who reach a good level of development across a range of learning is rising and has been above the national average for the last three years. This includes key skills in reading, writing and number work. The 2016 outcomes are particularly strong.
- While the achievement of both girls and boys is higher than that seen nationally, girls do better than boys. Leaders are aware of this school trend and are trying to develop the curriculum to take greater account of learning needs. For example, staff have introduced 'squiggle while you wriggle' to support boys' early writing and drawing skills.
- The early years leader promotes effective teamwork to ensure that approaches are consistent. She is aware that additional work is needed if the setting is to become even better, and has clear ideas about how to do this as a result of work with consultants and a visit to a centre of excellence.
- Focused teaching to small groups of children is effective in laying secure foundations for children's understanding of number and their skills in handwriting and early reading.

- Staff provide a broad variety of experiences to engage children and get them excited about learning. In the Nursery, for example, children enthusiastically worked together using large blocks to build a bridge that crossed a vampire's den. The teacher then helped them to act out a play and encouraged them to say their parts expressively.
- In both Nursery and Reception classes, staff provide effective supervision, but children are increasingly encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour. The staff take care to remind children to dress appropriately for the weather conditions and to wash their hands thoroughly. Pupils show caring attitudes and behaviour is consistently good.
- The learning environment is bright and stimulating and the resources are well organised. More could be done, however, to ensure that outdoor work offers children greater opportunities to develop their curiosity and imagination through challenges and investigational activities.
- Because activities are pitched at the right level for different abilities, children enjoy their learning and become absorbed in tasks. They show self-sufficiency, for example, when using computers or during role play outdoors. The most able children in the Reception class are expected to produce work of a high standard and this was evident when they were writing extended pieces about friendships.
- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and make progress in line with other children.

## School details

|                                |           |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 108241    |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Wakefield |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 10012040  |

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

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| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3–11   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 313  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Mr J Hesketh   |
| <b>Principal</b>                           | Mrs M Pickles  |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01977 723030   |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.acktonpastures.com">www.acktonpastures.com</a> |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | <a href="mailto:ap-info@haap.org.uk">ap-info@haap.org.uk</a>       |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 24–25 June 2014  |

## Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is slightly higher than average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and children looked after by the local authority).
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than average. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs, or education, health and care plans, is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards that set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Children in the early years attend part time in Nursery and full time in Reception.
- The school is federated with Half Acres Primary School.
- The principal, who is also the headteacher of Half Acres Primary School, was in post at the time of the previous inspection. She is a local leader of education and provides leadership support to other schools.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a total of 24 lessons or part-lessons across all classes.
- Inspectors listened to readers from Year 2 and all key stage 2 groups.
- Work in English, mathematics and foundation subjects was sampled jointly with the principal and the head of school.
- Meetings were conducted with senior leaders, middle leaders, subject leaders, governors, newly qualified teachers and three groups of pupils from key stage 1 and key stage 2. In addition, meetings were held with the local authority.
- Inspectors analysed information from a scrutiny of school documentation. This included published data about pupils' progress and attainment, previous inspection and monitoring reports, and the school's latest assessment information.
- Inspectors also viewed school improvement plans; the school's own evaluative judgements about its effectiveness; the school's information about the performance of current pupils; curriculum outlines; school monitoring information including records of staff training and appraisal; governing body minutes; and safeguarding documentation.
- The views of parents were taken into account through informal discussions and by analysing responses from the 17 parents who completed Parent View. The school's own parental survey information was also considered.
- The views of pupils were taken into account through three planned meetings.
- The views of staff were taken into account by analysing responses from the 23 staff who completed the inspection questionnaire.

## Inspection team

|                            |                  |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| James Reid, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Brian Stillings            | Ofsted Inspector |
| Michael Smit               | Ofsted Inspector |

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