

Abbey Park Academy

Keighley Close, Illingworth, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX2 9DG

Inspection dates

20–21 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
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's strong commitment and drive, along with the effective support of a skilled deputy and governing body have successfully improved the school's effectiveness since the previous inspection.
- Well-focused professional development and the strong support from the academy partner school and the Northern Education Trust have improved the quality of teaching. In all key stages, teaching is now good. As a result, most pupils achieve well from their previous starting points and standards are now rising.
- Effective provision in the early years ensures that learning gets off to a flying start. The youngest children are confident and enjoy school and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Between Years 1 and 6, pupils achieve well, particularly in reading and mathematics. Improvements to the teaching of reading have paid off. Pupils really enjoy reading. They are confident in reading challenging texts.
- Although pupils are now making good progress in writing, their achievement is still sometimes held back because opportunities to use and apply the skills they learn in English when completing work in other subjects are sometimes overlooked.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils has improved considerably. Effective use of the pupil premium funding means that disadvantaged pupils are now catching up and most are making good progress.
- While the progress of the most able pupils is also improving, sometimes the work they are given lacks challenge. Teachers' expectations of these pupils are sometimes too low.
- Provision to support the few pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities requires improvement. Additional support is not always targeted effectively to meet their needs. Leadership of this provision is still developing. The impact of support on pupils' achievement is not effectively checked.
- Expectations of pupils' good behaviour and conduct are consistently high. Pupils behave well and show good attitudes to learning. They are confident and articulate and take pride in their work, presenting it well and with neat handwriting.
- This is a caring and inclusive school. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are effective. Pupils said that they feel safe.
- Pupils understand the importance of good attendance. Leaders have improved attendance. The number of pupils who are regularly absent has reduced considerably.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by making sure that:
 - pupils are given good opportunities to use and apply the writing skills that they learn in English lessons when completing work in other subjects
 - teachers have consistently high expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve
 - all teachers check whether pupils understand what is being taught and adjust their teaching accordingly
 - provision to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective
 - activities in the early years always have a clear purpose for learning, particularly when children learn independently.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management even further by:
 - developing the leadership of special educational needs and/or disabilities so that the impact of the support provided on their achievement is effectively checked
 - making sure that a strong focus is placed on checking the achievement of the most able pupils.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have rigorously addressed the area identified as requiring improvement. The principal is passionate about giving pupils the best opportunities and has established a positive learning environment where pupils and staff feel valued.
- Mentoring and well-targeted professional training provided through the academy and joint working with other partners have been instrumental in improving the capacity of leaders and governors, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The principal has an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The most recent school development plan is concise. It sets out a clear path to further improvement with ambitious but realistic targets for pupils' achievement.
- The school has a robust approach to performance management. Performance management targets are clearly linked to pupils' progress and attainment. Support has been given where teaching is weaker, and this has had a marked impact on improving the quality of teaching. For example, leaders have reviewed and successfully strengthened the teaching of reading. Improvements in the teaching of phonics have been highly effective in helping pupils to develop good early skills in reading. While leaders relentlessly monitor the quality of teaching, there is not a sharp enough focus on how some groups of pupils are doing, such as the most able pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively. It provides extra teaching and welfare support for disadvantaged pupils. The use of more focused support has accelerated their progress, improved their attendance and is helping them to achieve well.
- Pastoral support is well targeted to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well integrated into this inclusive school. However, funding for these pupils is not used effectively to ensure that they receive good support in their academic learning. Leaders with responsibility for managing provision are inexperienced. The lack of precision in pupils' learning targets makes it difficult for leaders to check the impact of provision on their learning and progress.
- The school has adopted an engaging way to plan the curriculum so that pupils are interested in the topics they study and enjoy the visits that support their learning. Lessons, assemblies and visits promote effective reflection on faith, culture and personal choices. Pupils show respect for people from all backgrounds and faiths and have a good understanding of British values. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of rules and laws and how these help to keep order in school and society. The 'Pupil Parliament' reflects a good understanding of democracy. Pupils show compassion for those in difficulties, such as refugees. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education and life in modern Britain.
- The primary school physical education and sports funding has been used effectively to pay for specialist coaches with a high level of expertise. As a result, teachers have improved their skills to deliver good-quality physical education lessons. The school

offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities to all ages so that pupils can participate in more sports and represent the school in competitions.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective.
- The governing body holds the senior leaders effectively to account and challenges the principal.
- Governors have a good understanding about the quality of teaching across the school. They make good use of the expertise of the academy's achievement partner who provides them with comprehensive information about how well the school is doing.
- Governors understand that the progress that pupils make should be the main driver when awarding pay increases for teachers and the principal. They challenge any underperformance in teaching, while providing scope for teachers and leaders to develop professionally.
- Governors are aware that in the past disadvantaged pupils did not always achieve as well as other pupils. They know that the support and resources now in place for this group of pupils are having a positive impact on improving their achievement.
- Governors are fully conversant with their statutory duties for safeguarding, ensuring that staff are recruited with careful consideration.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has created a safe culture to take care of its pupils, and so pupils feel protected. All staff understand their obligations for safeguarding, and this is emphasised throughout the school's work as well as in lessons.
- Pupils said that they feel safe. The school conducts a range of risk assessments to keep both pupils and staff safe. Visitors receive a thorough safety briefing on arrival.
- Leaders and staff follow correct procedures to ensure that pupils are safe. They take appropriate action when necessary. They refer to and communicate with outside agencies and follow up concerns.
- Teachers are aware of the school's procedures for safeguarding. All members of staff are checked for their suitability to work with children. Accurate and up-to-date records of these checks are maintained.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved and is now good. As a result, standards are rising and most groups of pupils achieve well.
- Teachers have benefited from well-focused support and training to improve their

teaching practice. In mathematics for example, teaching now ensures that pupils are given good opportunities to embed their mathematical knowledge through regularly practising their skills. This has accelerated the rates of progress of pupils in mathematics throughout the school.

- The teaching of reading has been revised and strengthened and is now good. The introduction of an online programme has been effective in motivating pupils to read a wider range of texts. Some pupils are now making rapid progress. Younger pupils are provided with good opportunities to apply their phonic knowledge to decode words. Teaching ensures that pupils develop good early reading strategies.
- Teachers give pupils lots of opportunities to write across a range of curriculum subjects. This is evident in their topic and science books. Teaching ensures that written work is well presented and pupils develop neat handwriting from an early age. However, pupils are not always expected to use and apply the writing skills that they learn in English lessons when completing work in other subjects. This sometimes holds back their achievement in writing, especially in reaching the higher levels of attainment.
- Expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct are consistently high. Pupils concentrate well in lessons, maintaining a strong focus when discussing their work with one another, such as in groups or in pairs. Pupils learn from one another as well as from their teacher.
- Teachers regularly test and assess pupils' achievement. For the most part, this information is used to good effect to plan learning that builds well on what pupils already know and can do. Expectations of what the most able are capable of achieving are rising but are still not high enough to ensure that they make consistently good progress.
- Although some teachers are quick to check whether pupils understand what is being taught and adjust their teaching accordingly, others are not as effective in doing so. This sometimes hinders pupils' progress.
- The teaching of the few pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities requires further improvement. Their individual next steps in learning are not clearly established. Additional support is not always sufficiently focused on what they need to learn, and so their progress is variable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The needs of pupils and families are identified early and support is provided where necessary. The breakfast club is well organised with a choice of activities on a weekly basis.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. Pupils understand how to manage risk and what to do if there is an emergency evacuation. They explained how the school's 'Worry Box' is used so that a member of staff will help them sort out any problems. They understand the risks of using the internet and social

media. This is reflected in a good understanding of how and why they should keep personal information private.

- A pupil said, 'You can't really get sad in this school.' They are confident that when you sit on the friendship bench at break times someone will come and play with you. Pupils have a good understanding of bullying, including bullying related to race and gender. They respect the school rules and know there are consequences to bad behaviour.
- The school's ethos promotes effective reflection on faith, culture and personal choices. Assemblies deal with subjects such as the plight of refugees, and this provokes pupils' thoughtful consideration of the consequences of political change and people's different religious beliefs. They demonstrate a good understanding of British values, which prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do well.
- The school's provision in supporting pupils to manage their own behaviour is effective. The kaleidoscope room enables pupils to take some time out if necessary and reflect on their decisions. This is supported by a member of staff using a targeted programme of intervention.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They are courteous, well mannered and confident to engage in conversation. They listen well to adults and their peers and show respect for the views of others. They play cooperatively in the playground and move around the school in an orderly way.
- The school's drive to improve attendance has been effective. The celebration and reward system for good attendance has been successful in conveying the importance of attendance and punctuality to pupils. Attendance has improved and is now equivalent to the national average. The small proportion of pupils who are regularly absent is being quickly reduced.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Achievement since the last inspection has improved. From their previous starting points, pupils across the school now make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2015, pupils' attainment was broadly similar to the national average. In 2016, there was a dip in standards, which were below average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, from their below-average starting points, their progress was at least similar to pupils nationally. A strong focus on improving the quality of teaching in key stage 2 has paid dividends, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Pupils are now making good, and sometimes rapid, progress in key stage 2, and standards have risen. The large majority of pupils are now working at levels that are expected for their age.

- In the last two years, by the end of Year 2, pupils have reached standards that are similar to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement in key stage 1 has now strengthened. Pupils are building well on the good start they have had in the early years.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. The teaching of phonics in the early years and key stage 1 is effective. Pupils in need of extra help, including disadvantaged pupils, benefit from precise teaching, enabling pupils to make good progress in the early stages of reading. The large majority of pupils reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Any pupils who do not reach the standard are well supported to catch up. In 2016, for example, all pupils successfully reached the expected standard by the end of Year 2.
- The achievement of older pupils in reading has improved. Pupils, particularly the boys, enthuse about the range of reading books available and the new online scheme. Pupils clearly enjoy reading. They can discuss their preferences for authors and can tackle challenging texts. ‘My mum is now finding my books hard to read!’ commented one pupil. The most able readers can read fluently, discuss the author’s intent and infer meaning from the text.
- Pupils are making good progress in writing. Pupils’ writing books show that they use their well-developed phonic knowledge to good effect to help them to spell. Pupils write in a variety of genres. Their written work is well presented, with neat cursive handwriting. Opportunities to use and apply writing skills learned in English are sometimes missed when pupils complete work in other subjects.
- In the past, disadvantaged pupils have not achieved well. However, improvements in teaching and additional teaching groups, along with more carefully targeted use of the pupil premium funding, have resulted in much better outcomes. Disadvantaged pupils are now catching up and most are making good progress.
- The achievement of the most able pupils remains variable. In the past, a below-average proportion of pupils have reached the higher levels of attainment both at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. School data and inspection evidence shows that achievement of the most able pupils is starting to improve, particularly in reading and mathematics. However, expectations of the most able pupils are still too low for them to make consistently good progress, especially in writing. Tasks they are given sometimes lack the challenge they need to achieve well.
- The achievement of the few pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities requires improvement. While some do well, for others learning is too slow. Teaching of these pupils is not consistently good. Support plans showing what pupils need to learn next sometimes lack precision.

Early years provision

Good

- The majority of children enter the early years with skills and knowledge in communication and language lower than expected for their age. They get off to a flying start in the school’s nursery, which offers a bright and stimulating place to learn. By the time they leave the Reception class, children are well equipped for key stage 1. A large majority reach a good level of development.

- From the time children start school, no moment is wasted. Every opportunity to develop children's learning is exploited. Children are confident to come in and are eager to learn. The good relationships with each other, as well as with adults, are instrumental in helping them to make good progress.
- Good routines are established from the start. Children's behaviour is good, both in the classroom and in the outside area, where activities are well managed.
- Teaching is good. Adults make checks on what the children can do and what they need to learn next. This information is used well to teach the basic skills of mathematics and language and to direct the work of highly skilled support staff. The quality of questioning by all adults to move learning on helps to develop children's curiosity and a love of learning. However, occasionally, when children work independently, some activities lack a clear purpose for learning and do not fully challenge children's thinking for exploration and discovery.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Children quickly learn the basic skills of reading and apply the sounds they have learned when spelling words as they write. A child in Reception proudly showed an inspector their name they had written on a white board and then spelled it out just to make sure the inspector could read it.
- Good leadership in the early years ensures that children get the best start in school. They ensure that the welfare and safety of children are given a high priority and that staff are well skilled and responsive to children's individual needs. They ensure that good links are fostered with external agencies and specialists to support children with specific needs so they are motivated learners, able to participate fully in school life. Transition arrangements are good. All health and safety requirements are met; the unit is a safe place for children.
- Parents are happy with the early years provision. They enjoy the 'stay and play' sessions and feel welcomed by the calm and friendly staff.

School details

Unique reference number	140172
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10031023

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Flack
Principal	Emmeline Ford
Telephone number	01422 246610
Website	www.abbeyparkacademy.org/
Email address	eford@abbeyparkacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	23–24 June 2015

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school and is sponsored by the Northern Education Trust.
- Children in the early years receive full-time education in the nursery and the Reception class.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The school runs a breakfast club for pupils and a range of after-school clubs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of

Year 6.

- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about the curriculum in relation to each academic year.
- The school meets the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons in all classrooms and some together with the principal. In addition, inspectors observed small groups of pupils being taught.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work, listened to pupils read and spoke to pupils about their enjoyment of school and their opinions of behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and governors.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of school documents. These included the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, behaviour and attendance records, governing body documents and documents relating to the monitoring of teachers' performance.
- Too few parents submitted responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, to generate results. Inspectors spoke informally to parents who brought and collected their children to and from school.

Inspection team

Karen Heath, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Elizabeth Lawley

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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