

New Park Primary Academy

Skipton Road, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG1 3HF

Inspection dates

12–13 September 2018

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| 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 | Good |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has infinite enthusiasm and energy to secure academic excellence. He sets the very highest expectations for pupils' achievement and their well-being.
- The headteacher understands the importance of providing pupils with an engaging curriculum and he is well on the way to achieving this. However, plans for the staged development and assessment of pupils' learning in the foundation subjects and personal and social education are not fully in place.
- Recently appointed middle leaders are enthusiastic about their roles, but they are not fully effective. At this stage, they do not contribute fully to the quality assurance of their areas of responsibility.
- Governors are highly effective in offering challenge and support in equal measure to school leaders. They are focused on delivering their strategic duties successfully. Records of their meetings reflect this strength.
- Leaders have introduced more robust procedures to tackle pupils' persistent absenteeism. Although this met with some resistance from a small minority of families initially, procedures have led to a vast reduction in the proportion of pupils regularly missing school.
- Pupils' outcomes in all subjects at both key stages 1 and 2 improved markedly in 2018 to above the national averages. Past weaknesses are being ironed out effectively. However, leaders know there is more to do to sustain these improvements, particularly for the most able and disadvantaged most-able pupils.
- Raised expectations of staff, as well as significant investment in high-quality training and relevant professional development, have ensured that the quality of teaching is good and improving. However, aspects of phonics teaching require further improvement.
- The quality of teaching in the early years is good. Activities are well considered so that children make good progress from their starting points. Significant investment in outdoor provision and resources contributed to the increasing proportions of children who exceeded a good level of development this year.
- Pupils value their school, and their behaviour is good. There is a strong sense of belonging within the school and high levels of mutual respect. Pupils say that they feel safe and happy. This view is endorsed by parents.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - realising curriculum plans to ensure that there is clear guidance for the progression of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in foundation subjects and in personal and social education
 - embedding the new approach to assessment in order to support pupils' achievement
 - developing the leadership skills of recently appointed middle leaders so that they play a full part in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of their areas of responsibility.

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers provide work that challenges the most able pupils and disadvantaged most-able pupils, so that they can reach the high standards they are capable of consistently
 - the teaching of phonics makes better use of assessment information to ensure that there is a closer match of activities to abilities, particularly for those pupils already successful in attaining the expected standard.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The appointment of the headteacher in September 2017 has been pivotal to the changing fortunes of the school. He is relentless in his pursuit of excellence and has boundless energy to place the school at the heart of the local community. Such is his enthusiasm and positivity, that he has successfully invigorated the staff team. They share his determination for continued success and excitement for the future. He has nurtured a happy school where all are valued. It is great testimony to his leadership that despite the many changes he has implemented since his appointment, staff morale is extremely high.
- The contribution of the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust, who was also appointed in September 2017, cannot go unnoticed. Her exceptionally strong educational vision, detailed understanding of how children learn and her ability to skilfully manage the school's budget to maximum effect all enhance the strategic leadership of the school. Together with the headteacher and assistant headteacher, they present a dynamic leadership team with clear priorities and ambition to build on their many successes to date. Their highly effective leadership has ensured that the school continues to be good.
- Heavy investment in the professional development of all staff has undoubtedly contributed to the improvements seen in pupils' outcomes in 2018. Extensive training and support, and increasing levels of collaboration both within the school and across the trust, have resulted in the staff feeling highly valued. Staff who talked to inspectors were exceedingly complimentary about the support and guidance that they now receive.
- Leaders, including governors, are realistic in their evaluations of their work thus far and about what is still to do. As a result, their self-evaluation and development plans are helpful documents to steer future actions.
- The physical education (PE) subject leader ensures that the PE and sports funding is spent wisely. His meticulous record-keeping and monitoring of pupils' access to and participation in sporting activities have ensured that over half of all pupils have represented their school in competition. Equal access is foremost in his thoughts, which enables some of the school's most vulnerable pupils to be fully involved whenever possible. He has organised appropriate staff training to ensure sustainability.
- One of the headteacher's first tasks on appointment was to reorganise the staffing structure in order to gain financial stability and to create a tier of middle leadership that could increase leadership capacity. He has implemented these changes successfully. There are now clear lines of accountability across the school and for middle leaders, who are knowledgeable and highly enthusiastic, and who embrace their additional responsibilities with gusto. While this is a positive step forwards, several of the middle leaders are very recently appointed and not yet fully involved in monitoring and evaluating their subjects effectively.
- The headteacher has a strong vision for ensuring that lessons are highly engaging and reflective of the trust's priority for academic excellence. This is balanced with the

bespoke needs of the community. One of his first actions was to implement an effectively organised curriculum for English, PE and mathematics, the impact of which can be seen in the noticeable improvement to pupils' outcomes in the 2018 national end of key stage tests and assessments. Supporting this improvement are highly detailed progression documents that ensure teaching is sequential and is effectively building pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding over time. It is leaders' intention to produce similarly detailed documents for all other subjects. At the time of the inspection, they were not complete.

- The school's use of the pupil premium funding is effective. A proportion of additional funding is assigned to forces children. Staff have a good understanding of the barriers to learning that some pupils experience. They use conclusions from several research projects to inform their spending decisions. This had a positive effect on overall combined disadvantaged pupils' outcomes in 2018, which were much improved. Leaders have a clear focus on improving the achievement of disadvantaged pupils further and minimising any gaps that may continue to exist.
- A strong programme of assemblies, combined with aspects of the curriculum, supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. In all year groups, teachers use a class novel to direct their planning. The novels are carefully chosen, and they frequently explore age-appropriate themes which relate to social and moral issues in keeping with British values. For example, pupils told inspectors about their learning from a book which explored a child's facial disfigurement and the need to be respectful of others and considerate of their needs. Leaders are keen to develop this aspect of the curriculum in more detail.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) was appointed at the start of the last school year and has received trust support to develop her role effectively. She knows the pupils and their needs well. She ensures that the early identification of pupils' additional needs is sharply focused to enable appropriate support and advice to be organised quickly. The SENCo has established effective relationships with external agencies. However, she is in the early stages of playing a full role in monitoring and evaluating the impact of actions to improve the outcomes of children with additional needs.
- Parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were overwhelmingly positive about the school ensuring that their child was happy and safe. A minority of parents raised issues with the timeliness of communication. This had been noticed more recently since the removal of the text messaging service for parents.

Governance of the school

- The school became part of the Northern Star Multi-Academy Trust in December 2015. Following a review of practice, and despite high levels of support and training, an interim academy board replaced the local board of governors in October 2017. Since then, governors have worked tirelessly to both challenge and support the headteacher in order to make rapid improvements. From the start of this school year, a newly appointed local governing board is now in place.
- Governors are highly committed and very skilled. Several are experienced governors who understand their strategic responsibilities fully. An ongoing programme of review

and training ensures that this remains the case.

- In a short space of time, governors' combined financial acumen and focused decision making have ensured that the school is financially self-sustaining. They have successfully secured significant capital funding to improve the fabric of the school building, which is much needed.
- Governors have ensured that all policies and procedures are in place and aligned to Trust expectations.
- A review of the records of governors' meetings shows the extent of professional discussion and challenge afforded to school leaders. Governors question and triangulate school information thoroughly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders, including governors, have ensured that the school's safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The trust has back-dated any missing information, previously not collated, to ensure that systems to check the suitability of all staff are securely in place. During the inspection, governors raised their continuing concerns regarding the transport of pupils to and from the nearby army base. While this may remain an issue for governors, they have risk assessed the process sensibly and school systems remain thorough.
- A safeguarding governor is appointed, and along with the headteacher they have completed a detailed safeguarding audit, making checks on both policy and practice. All safeguarding arrangements are now aligned to those of the trust and are effective.
- A period of intensive training at the start of the last school year and ongoing training reviews and updates have ensured that staff understand the role that they play in keeping children safe.
- A review of school records shows that school leaders use a range of professional partners to support them in their work. Responses to any concern are proportionate and measured, but nonetheless incisive when required.
- Procedures for visitor access and managing pupils' absence are now more robust. Staff commented on how much more efficient and effective systems are because of the changes leaders have made. Anyone absent from school is now accounted for swiftly and any follow up required is completed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Since the appointment of the headteacher, there is a determined focus on continuously improving the quality of teaching and learning. Increased opportunities to plan collaboratively have enabled staff to better consider the sequence of learning activities. Significant investment in teachers' professional development has improved the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. This is best exemplified by the marked improvement in pupils' combined outcomes for reading, writing and mathematics in 2018. These more than doubled when compared with 2017, and are now above the most recently

published national averages.

- Detailed curriculum progression documents are available to support teachers' planning. These identify the small steps in pupils' learning required to successfully achieve the objectives laid out in the National Curriculum. Leaders have provided documents for the teaching of PE, English and mathematics. Teachers explained to inspectors that the changes introduced by the headteacher have been pivotal to the improvements noted in pupils' outcomes across the school. One teacher said: 'I've always worked hard, but I've had the best outcomes ever this year, because of the guidance and support I've received.'
- Leaders have also introduced a new approach to assessment which better identifies any gaps in pupils' learning. At a glance, teachers can see the precise components of learning that have been achieved and those that have not. As a result, teaching is focused and pupils' progress rates are improving, as evidenced in 2018 outcomes.
- Basic knowledge and skills for reading, writing and mathematics are taught discretely each morning. Other subjects are taught through a topic with plentiful opportunities for pupils to apply their basic skills appropriately. Pupils enthusiastically told inspectors about the 'Our Heritage' topic, which they completed in the summer term 2018. Pupils throughout the school learned about the history of the school, local tourist attractions and local industry. It culminated in the creation of their own heritage centre in school. Pupils developed their knowledge of the era and their skills in using historical sources and artefacts to support their understanding of chronology and life in the past. Such thoughtful and creative activities made memorable experiences for pupils. It is testimony to the skills of the teaching staff that although pupils completed this work in the summer term, they were still fully enthused by it and excited about what is still to come.
- Lessons are characterised by strong and positive relationships between pupils and their teachers. Classrooms are calm and purposeful places of learning and high levels of respect are evident throughout the school. Pupils thrive in this environment. Although they were only in the first full week of the new school year, pupils were settled and actively contributing and engaged in their learning.
- In October 2017, leaders introduced a new approach to the teaching of writing from Year 1 through to Year 6. Teachers now plan their lessons around a class novel that appeals to pupils' ages and interests. A range of activities successfully help to support pupils' increasing knowledge and skills in different writing styles. This is consistent across the school. This led to improved writing results at both key stages 1 and 2 in 2018. While this is pleasing, a review of pupils' work from the last school year indicated that pupils need extra guidance on how to develop their editing and redrafting skills, particularly for securing the higher standard.
- The teaching of reading is improving strongly because teachers ensure that pupils' learning builds sequentially over the year. Greater immersion in books through the class novel and significant investment in new reading books have contributed to pupils' improved achievement. In 2018, pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2, were above the national average, at both the expected and higher standard. In talking to pupils, it is clear they share a love of reading. Pupils who read to inspectors said, 'Our teachers expect us to read every day and I do' and 'Sometimes I feel like I'm in the book'.

- Careful analysis of pupils' historical achievement meant that in the last school year great emphasis was placed on securing pupils' mathematical fluency and improving their speed of times table recall. Assessment evidence shows that by the end of the last school year pupils had made significant gains in their mental arithmetic agility. However, a review of pupils' books indicates that some aspects of mathematical knowledge, specifically relating to geometry, were less well covered. Leaders have mapped out much clearer progression routes to mitigate against this for the forthcoming year. From observations, it is evident that pupils display positive attitudes to mathematics and enjoy their learning. Occasionally, the most able pupils do not receive work of sufficient complexity to challenge their thinking.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge for teaching phonics. However, the organisation of ability groups is not matched accurately enough to pupils' needs, particularly for those pupils who have already reached the required standard. Similarly, insufficient emphasis is placed on developing pupils' fluency in blending sounds together. Leaders acknowledge that this needs to improve.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. There is a collective determination from all staff to ensure that pupils are cared for and kept safe.
- Carefully selected novels are used to explore themes around disability, unkindness and loyalty in order to nurture pupils' growing understanding of tolerance and the importance of 'getting on' with people who may be different from themselves.
- Staff deal extremely well with difficult issues encountered by pupils in their everyday lives. They work effectively with external agencies, particularly mental health charities, to support individual pupils and to sharpen policy and practice.
- Bullying is rare in the view of pupils. A review of reported incidents would endorse this. Pupils who talked to inspectors felt confident that should an incident occur it would be dealt with effectively and quickly by staff.
- Staff have delivered assemblies and lessons to both parents and pupils on the importance of staying safe on the internet. However, during the inspection a review of older pupils' books indicated that some held 'YouTube' accounts and aspired to gain many followers online. On questioning, pupils could explain how to keep themselves safe by not revealing their identity, but were less aware of the dangers of grooming and radicalisation. Leaders acknowledge that aspects of their curriculum require further adjustment to accommodate pupils' changing use of social media and are acting to improve matters.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- This is a happy school with much joy and kindness. Pupils respect their teachers and

their teachers respect them. As a result, lessons are rarely disrupted, movement around the school is calm and orderly and playtimes are filled with fun things to do.

- Pupils are trained to be play leaders and to instigate interesting playground games. Significant investment in a range of resources means that there is always something to do and someone to play with. This enables playtimes to be lively and energetic.
- Exclusions are very rare and below the national average. Leaders and staff deploy many strategies to ensure that pupils remain in school.
- Pupils' overall attendance is in line with national averages. However, until the last school year the proportion of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, who were regularly absent from school, was above the national average. Leaders' prompt and efficient actions have reduced this considerably. Current figures obtained from the school indicate this is now much lower than the national average for primary schools.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Historically, pupils' combined attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 was below the national averages, at both the expected and the higher standard. This is no longer the case. In 2018, pupils' provisional outcomes from national tests and assessments improved markedly and are now above the national averages.
- Such improvements were widespread across the school and for all groups of pupils. This is clear from a sample of books retained by school leaders from the last academic year.
- Pupils make good progress in PE. They acquire age-appropriate knowledge and skills effectively and have access to a wide a range of sports and disciplines. However, pupils' outcomes in swimming are not as high as leaders would wish them to be, with only 58% of Year 6 pupils leaving having achieved their 25 metres award. Pupils access swimming lessons in Year 6, which leaves little time for any catch-up lessons. Leaders are making timetabling adjustments to mitigate against this in the future.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in any cohort varies considerably. In previous years, the impact of higher instances of persistent absenteeism among disadvantaged pupils affected some outcomes negatively. This is no longer the case. New systems to tackle poor attendance mean that disadvantaged pupils now make similar progress to their peers.
- A small minority of pupils are from forces families. Pupils arrive and leave at different points in the school year and stay for varying amounts of time. Improvements to the school's assessment system ensure that teachers have an accurate understanding of those aspects of learning that pupils need to secure. As a result, pupils make similarly good progress as that of their peers.
- There are very few pupils who are identified as having special education needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, which makes any statistical comparisons unsound. However, a review of the school's assessment information indicates that such pupils are making good progress against their personal targets and receiving appropriate levels of support.

- The proportion of pupils achieving the higher standards in 2018 increased at both key stages 1 and 2. While this is pleasing, the picture across the school is less consistent. In some year groups and in some subjects, the match of activities to the most able pupils' abilities is variable. Occasionally, the work set for them is too easy or too hard. For example, in one class, a pupil was asked to write sentences using 'fronted adverbials' and 'expanded noun clauses'. While the pupil could explain what both terms meant, the instruction was overloaded and left her unable to begin to write. In another class, the work set in mathematics was too easy and pupils quickly finished the task with minimal effort. Leaders acknowledge this to be an area for further improvement for the successes noted in 2018 to be sustained.

Early years provision

Good

- The leadership of the early years is good. Leaders have a clear overview of the strengths and areas of the provision that need to be improved further. Children make good progress and, although fewer children achieved a good level of development last year than in previous years, more children were able to exceed this.
- Transition arrangements are highly effective. Although only the first full week of school for some children, they were settled and content in their new surroundings. Routines were well established, and the children were confident in their setting and playing happily with each other.
- Adults reinforce key vocabulary well and are skilful in helping children develop the skills of negotiation. For example, children in the outdoor area were observed taking turns to cross the wooden bridge without adult intervention.
- The curriculum is well planned. Activities are varied and appealing, so children are drawn in and sustain concentration. Leaders have recently introduced a new system for capturing children's achievements and involving parents in this. However, they are not yet moderating this information to secure greater accuracy and security in their judgements.
- Significant investment in outdoor learning in the last school year has enhanced this aspect of children's experience. Children can now access both indoor and outdoor environments freely, and this supports children's independence.
- Adults use questioning effectively in order to develop and extend children's thinking. For example, while children were building the Tower of London, teachers used this opportunity to discuss the terms tall and small and to reinforce early counting.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 142497 |
| Local authority | North Yorkshire |
| Inspection number | 10053499 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 165 |
| Appropriate authority | Local governing body |
| Chair | Jenn Plews |
| Headteacher | Robert Mold |
| Telephone number | 01423 503 011 |
| Website | www.newparkacademy.co.uk |
| Email address | admin@newpark.n-yorks.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 22 October 2013 |

Information about this school

- Although the school has grown since it was last inspected, it remains smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school became part of the Northern Star Multi-Academy Trust in December 2015. The headteacher and chief executive officer were both appointed in September 2017.
- The overall proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average but varies considerably between year groups.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plan.
- The mobility of pupils at the school is higher than the national average. Approximately 13% of the school's population have parents who serve in the armed forces. They reside for varying lengths of time at the nearby army base.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes and year groups. Inspectors were accompanied by senior leaders in many of these observations. During lesson observations, inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and reviewed their work in books.
- Inspectors observed pupils at playtime and lunchtime, talked to a group of pupils about their learning and listened to them read. They reviewed a sample of pupils' books, retained from the previous school year, from Year 1 to Year 6 in a range of subjects.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, staff and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of school documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, improvement plans, data on pupils' attainment and progress, attendance and behaviour records, safeguarding procedures, evaluations of the quality of teaching, and minutes of the governing body meetings.
- Inspectors took account of the 19 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and associated free-text commentaries.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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