

# High Crag Primary Leadership Academy

Crag Road, Shipley, West Yorkshire BD18 2ES

## Inspection dates

19 to 20 March 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The acting principal is very effective. She leads the school with clear moral purpose. She has high expectations of herself, staff and pupils. Outcomes are improving rapidly.
  - Leaders provide many opportunities for staff to improve their skills through focused training. The Star Academies trust is a source of effective support for this work.
  - Leaders check the quality of teaching carefully. Most teaching is effective. Pupils enjoy learning in interesting and attractive classrooms where skilled staff care for and challenge them well.
  - Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective additional support. They achieve well from their different starting points.
  - The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. It is supported by a wide range of extra-curricular activities that further develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world we share.
  - There is still some variability in the quality of teaching. Where staff expectations in the school are not consistently high, teaching is less effective. This is slowing some pupils' progress.
  - Overall pupils' absence is close to the national average. However, persistent absence, although improving rapidly, is still high.
  - Early years provision is outstanding. Children do very well. This is because it is very well led, and staff have high expectations. Links with parents are strong and continuing to improve.
  - Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They learn how to manage potential risks to their well-being and safety.
  - Safeguarding is effective. Staff receive appropriate, up-to-date training that ensures they have the skills to keep pupils safe.
  - Reading is a strength of the school. Phonics is well taught. Pupils enjoy reading and books.
  - Governors, supported by the trust, challenge leaders effectively. They know the strengths and what needs to be done to improve the school further.
  - The school's work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is strong. Staff provide pupils with many opportunities to explore and develop their skills as leaders.
  - Pupils are generally well behaved. They are thoughtful. Relationships among pupils and between adults and pupils are respectful.
- Most parents and carers who made their views known speak very positively about the school and are pleased with what it provides. Some parents, however, would welcome more contact with the school.

## Full report

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

- Remove any remaining variations in the quality of teaching so that pupils make even better progress by ensuring that:
  - all staff have the highest expectations of what pupils can, and should, achieve
  - all staff use the detailed information the school gathers on pupils to focus their teaching so that all pupils consistently make the progress that they should
  - the consistently good practice that is evident in most of the teaching at the school is systematically shared across all year groups.
- Further develop links with parents by ensuring that:
  - skilled staff at the school continue to support the small number of families whose children find regular attendance challenging
  - there are more opportunities for parents to work with their children, both in and out of school, in order to support their child's learning
  - communications with parents are regular and suitably detailed so that parents feel more able to engage with the school and what it provides for their children.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The recently-appointed acting principal, building on the effective work of the previous principal, leads the school with a clear moral purpose. Effectively supported by the trust, she has moved swiftly to ensure that there is no pause in the school's continued improvement. She leads by example and has high expectations of herself, staff and pupils.
- Leaders have developed accurate, externally verified systems to check how well the school is doing. Information about pupils' progress is gathered regularly. Most staff use this information to focus teaching precisely on what pupils need to do next to make good progress. Leaders use this information carefully to assess teachers' performance and help target support and training so that the quality of teaching is constantly improving.
- Leaders, working with the trust, support staff effectively, particularly those that are new to teaching. These colleagues are encouraged to take part in a wide-ranging programme of well-thought-out activities. These activities include working closely with more experienced staff both within the school and across the other Star academies. As a result of these opportunities, newly and recently qualified teachers are well placed to contribute fully to the effective provision at the school.
- The school's curriculum is carefully thought out and focused on giving every pupil the knowledge and skills they need. The core subjects of English and mathematics are enhanced by a wider curriculum where pupils gain subject-specific knowledge and skills. The curriculum is effectively underpinned by a whole-school approach to reading that has been recently and effectively introduced. This is effectively led by the vice-principal and English leader.
- The curriculum is supported by a very wide range of extracurricular opportunities in, for example, music and the other arts. The school also ensures that all pupils have the opportunity to attend regular residential activities that help them develop their interpersonal skills and give them insights into the wider world.
- Because of the carefully thought out curriculum and the school's focused emphasis on developing all pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding and skills, pupils are very well prepared for their next steps in learning and to take their place as informed, reflective citizens.
- The additional funding that the school receives to support pupils with SEND is used well. The leader for this aspect of the school's work is very effective in ensuring that carefully focused actions are put in place to meet these pupils' needs. She is well supported in this work by the assistant headteacher. The SEND leader is relentless in her engagement with external agencies so that pupils with SEND get the support they need. She has also, through careful monitoring, assured the effect of these actions. As a result, pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium is used well to provide professional development for staff and to extend opportunities for pupils. The school offers many activities through which pupils can explore and understand the importance of healthy

life styles. The school takes part in a wide range of sports competitions with other schools in the area.

- Pupil premium funding is well and effectively deployed. Disadvantaged pupils make generally strong progress, similar to that of their peers. This is because the acting principal and her team are determined that no pupil is disadvantaged by their circumstances. The school works effectively to remove barriers to pupils' access to learning and success.
- There are still some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, particularly in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2. The acting principal, other leaders and governors are aware of this and have taken effective and detailed action to address and eradicate this comparatively weaker performance.
- Most parents who made their views known speak very positively about the school and the service it offers their children. A significant number spoke, in particular, about the care and challenge their children receive. As one parent wrote to the inspectors: 'The staff at this school give their best all the time. We have found that if we have any issues the turnaround is fast and the feedback is excellent.' However, there is a small group of parents who say that communications between the school and home could be improved so that they know in fuller detail how the school has dealt with any concerns or questions that they have.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors know the school and the community it serves well. Supported by the trust, they have worked closely with leaders to guide the school well through times of change and uncertainty. Governors draw from a wide range of evidence to ensure that they are well informed and able to both support and challenge leaders about the school's performance. This evidence not only includes detailed and clear analysis of the school's progress from leaders, but also direct evidence from regular and focused visits by governors to the school to assess the effect of its work.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Procedures and systems for checking the suitability of visitors and staff recruitment are strong. There are rigorous checks in place to assure staff's suitability to work with children.
- The acting principal ensures that there is a culture in the school where all members of staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and of the procedures that keep pupils safe. As a result, members of staff promptly identify and appropriately support potentially vulnerable pupils. They also engage tenaciously with outside agencies to ensure that pupils and their families get the support that they need.
- The designated safeguarding leader, working with her team, ensures that all staff and governors are well trained and skilled in safeguarding matters. There are regular training sessions to keep staff informed and up to date. The designated safeguarding leader is well supported by the designated safeguarding governor.
- As a result of the school's actions, pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They

have many opportunities to understand how to stay safe through the subjects they study in class time and during assemblies. Pupils told the inspectors that they regularly learn about how to stay safe online and when they are out and about.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Overall, teachers at the school are skilled and have high levels of subject knowledge. They know their pupils well and use this knowledge and other information gathered by the school to focus their teaching on the learning needs of individual and groups of pupils.
- Teaching assistants in the school are skilled and well deployed. They have a positive effect on pupils' learning. They support pupils well and help remove barriers to their learning by keeping them on track and focused on the task in hand.
- Phonics is well taught. Pupils respond well to the detailed, multi-sensory approach and the, generally, high expectations of both teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils' learning and confidence were developed at a good pace in the phonics sessions that inspectors saw during the inspection. As a result of the skill and vigilance of staff, pupils who may be falling behind are promptly identified and their needs met with additional support.
- Pupils at the school are keen to do well. They enjoy lessons. In a Spanish lesson observed, for example, they took clear pleasure in speaking and writing in the target language. Overall, in the lessons seen, pupils rise eagerly to the challenge when staff expectations are high. Relationships among pupils and between adults and pupils are open, honest and kindly. The atmosphere in classrooms is vibrant and exciting, and yet focused, particularly in upper key stage 2.
- Staff use questioning well to develop detailed responses from pupils and address misconceptions. Inspectors saw many examples of staff using insistent, yet kindly questioning to deepen and develop pupils' learning. They saw skilled staff challenging pupils in their learning by asking questions that asked 'why' and 'how' rather than the more mundane 'what'.
- Mathematics is, generally, well taught. Inspectors saw teaching staff, particularly in key stage 2, using carefully structured sequences of lessons. Across the school, staff set careful tasks and use focused questions to test out pupils' knowledge and skills and deepen their understanding. More challenging, knottier problems are routinely and readily available for the most able pupils to extend and deepen their skills. Overall, pupils respond to challenge with enthusiasm. They work well individually and together to solve problems. The diet of mathematics is appropriately varied with an emphasis on 'real-life' problem-solving that uses and tests out pupils' number and language skills.
- Inspectors saw examples in pupils' books of detailed and reflective writing that showed real engagement and pleasure in learning. In religious education (RE) writing, for example, pupils showed clear engagement and detailed reflection in their work on the Passover. Conversation with these pupils about their work confirmed this high level of engagement and interest.
- Parents receive regular half-termly updates on how their children are doing at school. As well as the regular reports, staff are readily available if parents wish to talk about a

particular issue. Parents said that they welcomed this.

- Teachers generally follow the school's approach to feedback so that pupils are clear what they need to do next to improve. However, inspectors did see examples of pupils not responding to staff requests and, as a result, opportunities were lost for some pupils to build on and extend their learning. This was particularly the case in key stage 1. Inspectors also saw examples of work which was untidily presented, apparently going unchallenged by staff.
- Teaching is generally strong across the school. However, there are occasions where staff expectations of what pupils should and must achieve are not consistently high. In these instances, pupils do not make the progress that they should. Inspectors saw, for example, the use of worksheets where the boxes available for pupils to write in were too small for them to write at length to develop and deepen their learning. This was particularly the case for the most able pupils.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are aware of the needs of others. They are polite. They relate well to each other and to staff. They spoke enthusiastically about how much they enjoy school and how well the staff care for them. They know that staff at the school would be there for them if they ever had a problem.
- Pupils wear their uniforms with pride. There are many attractive displays that help pupils understand and celebrate their place in the school, the local community and the world. These displays are regularly updated and celebrate both individual and group success and effort. There is no litter. The school is a tidy and comfortable place to learn and be in.
- As a result of the school's work, pupils understand the forms that bullying can take and what to do to combat it if it were to occur. Pupils say that bullying is very rare. They say that they feel safe and are safe.
- The school fosters in pupils a healthy lifestyle. Meal choices are healthy. Pupils know what constitutes a healthy diet.
- The school is energetic in its engagement with pupils' families. There are strong links with home, especially with those of vulnerable pupils. The work of the in-school speech and language provision is very well led and very effective in supporting and developing pupils' skills and self-confidence.
- Most parents, when asked, said that they were very satisfied with the service the school offers. They commented positively about the regular reports they receive about their children's progress and well-being and the ready accessibility of staff. However, some parents said that they would welcome closer links and more ready access to staff at the school.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils told inspectors that behaviour was generally good. They said that the school's systems to support and reward positive behaviour are effective and make a difference. As a result, disruption to learning is rare and when it does occur it is dealt with swiftly and well.
- Pupils are, generally, very interested in what they do at school. They want to do well. They like and respect their teachers. They enjoy learning and finding out. They have responded very favourably to the school's focus on reading.
- As a result of leaders' efforts, pupils' overall attendance is improving and is now very close to the national average. However, there is still a high rate of persistent absence by a small number of pupils in the school. Records show that the school's vigorous and targeted work to improve rates of attendance are effective. Pupils are very clear about why it is important to attend school regularly.

### Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils' progress is good because good and improving teaching is having a positive effect on current pupils' outcomes. Increasingly, this teaching takes careful note of the precise needs of pupils. This is because leaders, working with all staff, including middle leaders, have introduced more detailed and regular monitoring of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. This has enabled staff to use the information they gather to be more focused and successful in their teaching.
- Evidence gathered through the scrutiny of a large number of pupils' books, spanning the full range of subjects, including RE, geography and history, shows good and sustained progress in almost all years across the school. The school's own detailed, moderated and checked assessment information indicates that pupils make particularly good progress in upper key stage 2. Inspection evidence, including the scrutiny of books and observation of learning in lessons, supports this view.
- The percentage of pupils meeting the required standard for the phonics screening check is improving year-on-year. In 2018, the results for Year 1 pupils showed a further improvement to very slightly below the national benchmark. Inspection evidence shows that current Year 1 pupils, building on their Reception experience, are making good progress. They apply their developing phonics skills very well.
- Pupils who took the phonics check again at the end of Year 2 in 2018 all made gains on their previous outcomes. Inspection evidence gathered about these pupils, now that they are in Year 3, shows that the school has been successful in further developing the reading skills of this small group of pupils. Consequently, they are more able to access the full curriculum. The staff who support these pupils with reading are very skilled.
- Outcomes at the end of key stage 1 in 2018 show the proportion of pupils achieving at the expected standard in reading and mathematics is above national expectations. Writing standards are improving strongly.
- As a result of good and better teaching, over the last three years, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading at the end of key stage 2 has improved by approximately ten percentage points each year. The proportion achieving

at a greater depth of understanding has also increased significantly. Similarly, in mathematics, although the improvements have not been as striking, there have been significant year-on-year increases in the proportion of pupils achieving at the expected standard and at a greater depth of understanding. Writing standards, carefully moderated by the local authority, over three years have been consistently at or above those expected nationally.

- Across the school, disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points. The differences between the outcomes of these pupils and their peers are narrowing. This is because, as a result of leaders' actions, all staff are aware of the needs and barriers to learning of the disadvantaged pupils in their care and teaching is carefully focused on supporting them so that they make good progress.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress because of the staff's detailed knowledge of their needs and teaching which breaks down tasks into manageable steps. The very effective leader for this area of the school's work has also identified areas for next steps in further improving teaching and learning for these pupils.
- Reading is a strength of the school. There are daily opportunities for pupils to read in school. Reading at home is carefully supported and recorded. Class reading books are carefully chosen and form part of a whole-school strategic approach to reading which encourages pupils not only to read with increasing confidence and skill, but also to see the links between reading and their own writing. Regular reading is encouraged through a range of awards and regular celebration and reading events. These incentives are part of a whole-school reading strategy. They are having a considerable and positive effect on pupils' skill, experience and pleasure in reading.
- Pupils in Year 6 are very well prepared for their next steps in learning at secondary school. A full and detailed programme of partnership events and experiences ensures that these pupils have insights into learning at secondary school. These include dedicated mathematics and science days as well as sporting events. Staff ensure that pupils with particular needs receive additional opportunities to visit their chosen secondary school. Staff make sure that secondary colleagues are completely aware of the needs of these pupils and monitor their progress carefully.

## Early years provision

## Outstanding

- The leadership of early years is very effective. Since her recent appointment, the leader has developed an effective team of staff who have a wide range of skills that they are keen to improve even further. All staff feel valued and able to contribute to planning and the monitoring of children's progress.
- The early years team's assessment of children as they enter the provision is meticulous and careful. It draws on a wide range of evidence and information about each child. By the time they enter the provision, staff know the children and their families well and, as a result, they can plan carefully for each child's needs. The early years team engages very closely with external agencies to ensure that, as far as is possible, children and their families receive the support that they need.
- The nursery provision is very effective. It prepares children very well for their next steps. Children enter the nursery with skills and knowledge that is typically below that



expected of their age. As a result of the outstanding work of the provision, children who have attended the school's nursery enter the school's Reception class well placed to make strong progress.

- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year is improving strongly year-on-year. In 2018, it was above the national benchmark. In 2018, children, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, did better than the national benchmark in all the early learning goals. Current assessments, supported by inspection evidence, strongly indicate that it will continue to improve.
- Early years staff assure the accuracy of their judgements by working with and comparing their judgements with other schools, the Star Academies Trust and the local authority.
- Children's acquisition of language and its use in communication is a high priority in the provision. Inspectors saw staff modelling language very carefully and effectively as they spoke with children. They used questioning very well to encourage and extend children's vocabulary and confidence with words.
- Staff have developed a stimulating and safe learning environment which provides a wide range of interesting learning activities and experiences. The indoor and outdoor environment is stimulating. It is uncluttered. There is a strong emphasis on exploration and encouraging the development of language. A great deal of thought, based on detailed observations of how children have progressed, goes into arranging the space to support and stimulate children's pleasure in learning. Children, including those in the provision for two-year olds, respond very positively to this. They behave well, sharing and collaborating with each other.
- The teaching of reading is a strength of the early years provision. Phonics is well taught. Inspectors saw children being expertly taught by skilled staff. Children make strong progress in their reading. They talked confidently to inspectors about what they liked about books. Children regularly read at home and parents welcome the support they are given by the school to help them read with their children. Staff in early years work effectively to involve parents in their children's reading through a range of interesting, and increasingly well-attended, events where parents can read and explore books with their children.

## School details

Unique reference number	142582
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	10059026

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	432
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Hamid Patel CBE The chair of the local governing body is Kieran Larkin
Acting Principal	Helen Ray
Telephone number	01274 584 068
Website	<a href="http://www.highcragprimary.com">www.highcragprimary.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@highcragstaracademies.org">info@highcragstaracademies.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- High Crag Primary is part of the Star Academies trust. It joined the trust in April 2016. It has its own local governing body.
- The acting principal has been in post since January 2019.
- It is larger than the averaged-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the average
- Most pupils are White British. Most pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is average.
- The school runs a unit called the DSP (Designated Specialist Provision) which provides up to six pupils from the local authority with special educational needs in speech and language. There are currently five pupils on roll.

- The school offers a breakfast club. The school also offers a range of clubs and activities after school.
- The school has a nursery provision that offers both morning and afternoon sessions. It also has provision for two-year-olds.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a range of subjects across the school. They visited all classes, including in the on-site Thrive and speech and language provision. Most of these lessons were jointly observed with the acting principal or a member of the senior leadership team. Inspectors listened to pupils from the Reception class and Years 2, 3 and 4 read. They also talked with pupils across the school about their experience of reading, both in and out of school.
- Inspectors observed two whole-school assemblies.
- Inspectors met with the acting principal and the deputy principal, the special educational needs coordinator, middle leaders, the senior staff with responsibility for safeguarding, a group of teachers and recently and newly qualified teachers. In addition, the lead inspector met with members of the transitional governing body, including the chair of this body, and with the chief executive officer and other officers of the Star Academies trust.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of the school’s documentation, including that related to safeguarding, achievement, the quality of teaching, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour and conduct at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They spoke informally with pupils about their experience and attitudes to school during these times. Inspectors also spoke more formally with pupils from key stage 1 and key stage 2 about school and the range of opportunities it offered them to explore and enjoy learning.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide sample of pupils’ work from all year groups and in a range of subjects.
- The lead inspector considered the 27 responses to an Ofsted survey of staff and 39 responses to an Ofsted survey of pupils. Inspectors also spoke with parents at the start and end of the school day to seek their opinions of the school’s work and care for their children. The lead inspector also reviewed the 22 responses on Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View. The lead inspector also reviewed 21 responses from parents via the free-text facility. The lead inspector also spoke with a parent on the telephone.

## Inspection team

Mark Evans, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Christine Turner

Ofsted Inspector

Gillian Wiles

Ofsted Inspector

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