

Park Vale Academy

Top Valley Drive, Top Valley, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG5 9AZ

Inspection dates

8–9 May; 19 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- In the past, governors, the trust and leaders have been too slow to address the weaknesses at the school.
- Pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), underachieve across a range of subjects, including mathematics.
- Teaching over time has been ineffective, especially in mathematics. The current quality of teaching is improving, but it is not yet sufficiently strong enough to address gaps in pupils' understanding and knowledge. Pupils continue to underachieve.
- Leaders do not analyse effectively all the information they gather about their pupils. Consequently, they are not able to spot quickly any patterns in the information they hold. Leaders are not able to share vital information with governors or the trust about pupils who have left the school roll, for example.
- Leaders do not evaluate the improvement strategies that they introduce. Therefore, they are not able to state which are successful and which are not.
- Governors do not hold leaders to account effectively for low standards at the school. They lack the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their delegated duties.
- Leaders do not ensure that the pupil premium funding, Year 7 catch-up funding and funding for pupils with SEND is having a positive impact on improving outcomes for those pupils the funding is intended to help.
- The provision for pupils' personal development and the teaching of personal, social and health education (PSHE) are not effective.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are ineffective. For example, leaders do not routinely complete all necessary employment checks on new staff.
- Some teachers have low expectations of pupils. Learning tasks lack challenge and teachers' inconsistent use of the behaviour policy means that learning can be disrupted in lessons.
- Disadvantaged pupils are disproportionately often excluded from school compared with other pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Careers education and guidance is a strength. Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities to inform them of possible career options. This prepares them well for their future choices.
- Outcomes and teaching in Spanish are strong.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum meets the needs and interest of pupils and offers a range of appropriate courses.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the impact of leadership by ensuring that:
 - the rate of improvement is quickened across the school and strategies lead to better achievements for pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND
 - all staff understand and carry out their safeguarding duties and that all relevant employment checks are completed on staff joining the school
 - leaders evaluate the effectiveness of introduced improvement strategies to ensure that they know which ones work and which ones do not
 - leaders routinely analyse and monitor information they collect about pupils to be able to spot any trends or patterns quickly, particularly concerning pupils' absences, behaviour incidents and pupils who leave the school roll
 - governors are trained effectively and their skills developed so that they can fulfil their delegated duties
 - leaders routinely evaluate that the additional funding the school receives has a positive impact on the outcomes of those groups of pupils it is intended for
 - leaders of the SEND provision have an accurate overview and make sure that pupils make the progress of which they are capable.
- Improve teaching, so that pupils make consistently good or better progress, by ensuring that teachers:
 - have high expectations of all pupils and what they can achieve, particularly in mathematics and history
 - take full account of pupils' needs and abilities so that learning is neither too easy nor too difficult
 - provide tasks that stretch and challenge the most able pupils so that they make the progress they should
 - ensure that tasks are well planned to match pupils' needs so that they do not become disengaged or waste valuable learning time.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by ensuring that all teachers:
 - consistently and fairly apply the school's behaviour policy so that pupils' learning is not inhibited
 - are sufficiently skilled and knowledgeable to teach the PSHE programme, so that pupils have a greater understanding of important issues.
- Reduce the amount of time some pupils, particularly the disadvantaged, miss from school because of being persistently absent or excluded for a fixed period.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- In the past, leaders, including governors, have not acted quickly enough to address the shortcomings at the school. While some improvements have been made and are evident, such as ensuring that there is a stable teaching staff in most subject areas, standards at the school remain too low. The headteacher, with the support of the trust, is well placed to bring about the necessary improvements.
- Leaders' plans for improvement lack detail and are not rigorous enough. Some leaders do not consider how they will evaluate any improvement strategies and measure the impact of their actions. Leaders are therefore not clear which strategies are making the greatest difference.
- Senior leaders' analysis of information about pupils, such as their attendance, types of behaviour incidents and the characteristics of the pupils who leave the school roll, is not effective enough. As a result, leaders are not able to identify any trends or patterns and intervene in a timely manner to address any issues. Additionally, leaders are not able to share vital information with staff, governors or the trust.
- Some middle leaders are not yet effective in carrying out their assigned roles to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility. The support of trust subject directors has had a positive impact on the leadership of English and science. However, in other areas, the improvements in subject leadership are not evident, such as in mathematics.
- Leaders' monitoring of the effectiveness of additional funding they receive, including the pupil premium and the Year 7 catch-up funding, is ineffective. Disadvantaged pupils performed poorly across a range of subjects in 2018. In some cases, their performance was in the bottom 10% nationally. Current disadvantaged pupils continue to achieve less well than others. Leaders' action plans to address this lack detail and appropriate success criteria. Therefore, leaders are not able to identify if the spending is having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Leadership of the provision for pupils with SEND is weak. Leaders do not have a clear overview of how well current pupils are achieving. Monitoring and tracking lack detail and are not enabling leaders to intervene quickly. The accessibility plan, designed to mitigate some of the barriers that pupils with SEND face, is not fit for purpose. The additional funding for these pupils is not spent effectively and so does not make a difference to their learning and achievement. As a result, pupils with SEND continue to underperform.
- A notable number of pupils leave the school throughout the academic year. Leaders keep records of these pupils and their destinations. However, these records are not always accurate, and leaders do not routinely analyse the characteristics of these pupils. For example, leaders were unaware that the vast majority of those who left the school in the last academic year were disadvantaged pupils. Leaders are therefore not able to share this information with staff and governors.
- The headteacher has redesigned the school's current curriculum. It is broad and offers a variety of appropriate courses. Pupils take a range of academic and vocational

courses that meet their needs and career aspirations.

- Senior leaders focus well on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Training provided by the trust has had a positive impact on teachers' skills. However, improvements in teaching are not yet fully embedded. There are still great variations in the quality of teaching between and within subjects. Leaders do not yet fully share and disseminate some of the strong practice that exists within the school, such as in languages.
- The provision for careers information, advice and guidance from Years 7 to 11 in order to raise pupils' aspirations is successful. Pupils benefit from a wide range of appropriate activities, including personalised, impartial careers advice and help when making their subject choices at the end of key stage 3. As a result, pupils are well informed about their next steps and move on to appropriate destinations.
- Leaders' work to promote pupils' personal development is ineffective. There is a programme to develop pupils' understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. However, teachers do not have the necessary knowledge or skills to teach about these issues sufficiently well. Pupils commented that they would welcome more teaching on current social and cultural topics.

Governance of the school

- The Redhill Trust operates a scheme of delegation whereby the board of trustees delegates the responsibility for holding leaders to account to a local governing body (LGB) in each school.
- The LGB does not hold leaders to account for the low standards in this school effectively. Governors are not skilled enough to perform their delegated duties because they have not been trained adequately. They lack sufficient knowledge and understanding of the information that is provided for them. They are over-reliant on leaders for any information.
- Members of the LGB have not assured themselves that safeguarding arrangements are secure, and that additional funding is having a positive impact on the pupils it is intended for.
- Governors, most of whom are relatively new to their roles, are dedicated and passionate about the school. They want the best for the pupils. They say that they would welcome more training to ensure that they complete their duties effectively and bring about rapid improvement.
- The board of trustees has recognised these shortcomings. The schemes of delegation and arrangements for governance are currently under review.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Leaders have not ensured that they have followed the guidance on safer recruitment issued by the Secretary of State. Leaders cannot be certain that all staff are suitable to work with children because they have not carried out all the necessary checks.
- The risk assessments that leaders have put in place, to mitigate risk when information

is unavailable, lack rigour and detail.

- Leaders have not ensured that all staff fully understand their duties to safeguard pupils. They do not evaluate the impact of staff training. For example, they have not checked that all staff know how, and to whom, to refer safeguarding concerns.
- Leaders have introduced a new electronic system of recording safeguarding concerns. Staff have received training in the use of this system. However, records of safeguarding and the monitoring of vulnerable pupils are not sufficiently detailed. It is not clear what action has been taken to support pupils when concerns have been raised.
- The checks on pupils who attend alternative provision are not secure enough.
- A significant minority of pupils do not feel safe in school.
- Leaders are aware of safeguarding risks that are pertinent to the local area and have amended some aspects of the curriculum to ensure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. This work at times is hindered by staff not having the necessary skills to teach these issues. Some work is complemented by visiting speakers, for example the police.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- In the past, the quality of teaching and learning did not ensure that pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills were secure. While teaching is beginning to improve, it is not yet sufficiently strong enough to address effectively the gaps in pupils' knowledge. Some teachers still do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially most-able pupils. Pupils' progress is not good enough.
- The quality of teaching across the curriculum is marred by inconsistencies. While some effective teaching exists, especially for less-able pupils, a significant amount of teaching fails to meet the needs of middle- and high-ability pupils. Consequently, pupils become disengaged, their learning slows, they take part in low-level disruption and they make weak progress.
- Teaching and learning in mathematics are not effective. The curriculum in key stage 3 in mathematics is not sufficiently challenging. Pupils complete work that they have completed in primary school. Pupils acquire some mathematical skills which they practise regularly. However, teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to solve problems and reason mathematically or to develop their mathematical vocabulary.
- Teachers do not ensure that pupils have effective recall of their learning and can confidently apply their new skills. Pupils' literacy skills are not well developed, misconceptions are not addressed quickly enough, and pupils repeat the same errors again and again. As a result, pupils' work shows many examples of weak spelling and missing punctuation, unfinished work, and work of low standard.
- When planning lessons, teachers do not take full account of pupils' abilities and individual needs. Consequently, the most able pupils receive work that is too easy for them and pupils who benefit from more support find work too hard. They then become disengaged and their learning halts.
- In some lessons, pupils with SEND receive support from teaching assistants, who check

pupils' understanding and put right any misunderstandings. As a result, pupils with SEND are now beginning to access their learning in a greater number of subjects. The impact of this work on pupils' outcomes is yet to be seen.

- Teaching in languages, especially in Spanish, is strong. Here, teachers routinely match the learning to pupils' needs and abilities and use a range of strategies to check how well pupils are achieving. Outcomes in Spanish are better than those seen in other subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Pupils say that bullying occurs at the school. They have a view that it is not consistently dealt with by staff. Some pupils said that they do not report any incidents of bullying because 'no one will do anything anyway'. Almost half of the parents and carers who completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, raised bullying as an issue. However, most parents feel that their children are safe when at school.
- The programme to teach pupils about fundamental British values, such as the rule of law and democracy, is not well developed. Pupils demonstrate little, if any, knowledge around the topics of extremism and radicalisation.
- Leaders use alternative provision for a number of pupils. While the use of these placements is appropriate and allows pupils to stay in education, leaders' monitoring of alternative provision is not as effective as it could be. Leaders' record-keeping is not always accurate and they are not clear about how the attendance of pupils is checked on days when they are due to attend the provision.
- The quality of the teaching and learning in PSHE lessons is weak. While many pupils learn about a range of issues, such as online safety in computer lessons instead of PSHE, the programme is not effective enough to ensure that pupils' knowledge and understanding are developed sufficiently well. As a result, pupils do not have a detailed understanding of life in modern Britain.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Too many disadvantaged pupils continue to miss time from their education due to being persistently absent from school or being excluded for a fixed period.
- The school operates an isolation unit called the 'reintegration centre'. This facility is not conducive to learning because pupils do not complete meaningful or appropriate work. It is not an effective for a small number of pupils as they continue to display poor behaviour repeatedly.
- Leaders do not analyse the types of behaviour infringements committed by pupils. The isolation unit records are not analysed to spot trends or patterns in pupils' behaviour. Therefore, leaders are not able to state clearly whether the number of behaviour incidents is declining over time.

- Behaviour on the whole is improving, which has resulted in fewer pupils being excluded from school, both permanently and for a fixed period. However, low-level disruption occurs in lessons when the learning is not matched to pupils' needs or abilities. Teachers do not apply consistently or fairly the behaviour policy. As a result, low-level disruption in lessons is not addressed effectively which then limits the learning of pupils.
- According to school records, overall attendance has improved and is now broadly in line with national figures.
- Alternative provision is made for pupils who might be at risk of leaving education. Leaders choose courses and placements carefully to ensure that they match the interests and career aspirations of pupils. As a result, pupils remain in education and, generally, their attendance and learning improve. However, leaders' monitoring of pupils on placements is not sufficiently sharp and focused.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- In 2017 and 2018, pupils' progress was poor across many areas of the curriculum. Current pupils are beginning to make better progress. However, the school's information and work in pupils' books show that current pupils' progress is not consistently strong enough to address previous shortcomings. Pupils continue to underachieve.
- The progress of current pupils, especially in key stage 4, has been hampered by poor attendance and weak teaching. Leaders' recent actions have helped to fill some gaps in pupils' knowledge and raise their aspirations. However, gaps remain, and pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. This is particularly so for the most able pupils and for disadvantaged pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils, both historically and those currently in school, do not achieve well. The progress they make is significantly below that of other pupils with similar starting points. This is because of leaders' ineffective use of the pupil premium funding, teachers' low expectations of these pupils and leaders unsuccessfully ensuring that these pupils attend school regularly enough. Work to address this is beginning to show some improvements, although these are not yet widespread or consistent.
- Pupils with SEND have not achieved well over time. While pupils now receive more effective support in lessons, they are not yet achieving well enough to reach their potential. Leaders do not focus sharply enough on analysing how well pupils are doing to be able to intervene quickly enough when they fall behind.
- The provision for independent careers advice and guidance is successful. Pupils benefit from independent advice and tailored information about possible career options. Leadership of this aspect of the school's work is effective. For example, pupils benefit from off-site visits and talks by potential future employers. Pupils are complimentary about this aspect of their education.
- Leaders have streamlined assessment systems across the school. They are now more able to check on how well current pupils are achieving and can put interventions in place when pupils need to catch up. Some of this work has recently been introduced. It has not yet had sufficient time to embed fully and lead to sustained improvements in

pupils' outcomes.

School details

Unique reference number	144487
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	10087334

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	763
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	John Rudd
Headteacher	Steve Bowhay
Telephone number	01158 221244
Website	www.parkvaleacademy.org.uk
Email address	admin@parkvaleacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school became part of the Redhill Academy Trust in September 2016, when it was known as Top Valley Academy. In September 2017, the school changed its name and moved into a new building. The headteacher took up the position in September 2017.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is average. The proportion who have an education, health and care plan is well below average.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school works with three alternative providers. This allows some pupils in key stages 3 and 4 to receive either part or all of their education off the school site. These providers are the Redhill Trust Reintegration Centre, Stone Soup Academy and the Jubilee Academy.

Information about this inspection

- An initial inspection visit to the school took place on 8–9 May 2019. Four of Her Majesty’s Inspectors undertook a further visit to the school on 19 June 2019 to gather additional evidence.
- Inspectors observed learning across key stages in a wide range of lessons, including tutor time, some jointly with a senior leader. In total, 47 lessons, or parts of lessons, were visited.
- Meetings took place with senior and middle leaders, teachers, governors, and representatives from the trust. They also met with kitchen and caretaking staff.
- Discussions were held with groups of pupils to gather their views on a variety of issues, including safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and teaching.
- Inspectors looked at pupils’ work in lessons and in a sample of pupils’ workbooks.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour before school, during lessons, around school, during tutor time, at breaktime and at lunchtime.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in discussion groups and informally around the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the school’s self-evaluation, improvement plans, minutes of the governing body meetings, plans for the use of additional government funding, information about the attainment and progress of all pupils, records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding, and information on the school’s website
- Inspectors considered the 23 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, alongside 11 free-text responses, the 53 responses to Ofsted’s staff survey, the 43 responses to Ofsted’s pupil questionnaire, the trust’s own surveys and one telephone call with a parent.

Inspection team

Sue Vasey, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Long	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Thompson	Ofsted Inspector
Jenny Brown	Ofsted Inspector
Bianka Zemke	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Chris Davies	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Hazel Henson	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Deborah Mosley	Her Majesty’s 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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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