

# Inspection of a good school: Park Hall Academy

Carberry Way, Weston Coyney, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST3 5QU

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Inspection dates:

9–10 October 2019

## Outcome

Park Hall Academy continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this school. Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent. Pupils told me that they feel safe and well cared for. They know that staff want the best for them. Pupils are not worried about being bullied. They told me that if bullying did happen, an adult would deal with it quickly.

Pupils work hard in lessons. They have very positive attitudes to learning and are rightly proud of their work. Pupils behave exceptionally well as they move around the school and at breaktimes. Some pupils are trained to be 'activity ambassadors'. They organise a variety of games and make sure that no one is left out at social times.

Leaders want pupils to do well in all areas of the curriculum. Pupils told me they enjoy learning because topics are interesting. They like the visits that are linked to learning, for example to local museums, castles and pottery workshops. Leaders celebrate pupils' achievements in all subject areas with parents and carers. This is often through the school's social media platforms. Parents are positive about the school. Many like the opportunities they have to come into school to get involved with what their children are learning.

## What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Children get off to a great start in the early years. They enjoy coming to school, where they are supported to become confident, inquisitive learners. Children learn to read as soon as they start Reception. Staff ensure that they promote reading and a love of stories linked to all areas of learning. Mathematics is taught well. Children have a good understanding of number and shape by the time they are ready for Year 1. There are positive relationships between parents and staff.

Staff teach phonics well. Pupils practise the sounds they know daily. Their books are well matched to their current reading skills. Staff accurately spot any pupil who is at risk of falling behind and provide support to help them catch up quickly. Pupils are keen readers.

They told me that there are plenty of books to choose from.

Leaders have changed the way reading is taught in key stage 2. Teachers now make sure that pupils have daily opportunities to read and talk about what they have read. Pupils develop the skills they need to show how well they understand what they have read. Pupils enjoy reading to the Park Hall Pals. These characters help with specific aspects of reading both at school and at home. They are popular with pupils and parents.

Leaders have provided appropriate training for all staff in mathematics. Teachers understand what pupils need to learn and the order it should be taught. Pupils have daily opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills. They told me that they enjoy solving problems. Sometimes pupils could cope with even more challenging tasks.

Teachers know the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities well. They adapt tasks to meet the needs of this group of pupils, when necessary, in all subjects.

The school's curriculum is well planned. Pupils experience the full range of subjects. Learning builds on what pupils already know. Teachers make links between different subjects. This helps pupils to deepen their understanding of what they are learning about in topics. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about what they have learned in history. They are able to explain how things that have happened in the past affect our lives today. In some foundation subjects, leaders have not had the opportunity to check on the quality of education. There are plans for this to happen soon.

Pupils are proud of their extra responsibilities. The junior leadership team encourages all pupils to behave well. Reader leaders willingly give up some of their lunchtime to help younger pupils read.

Pupils understand the school's values. They are encouraged to express their own points of view and they understand the importance of tolerance. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about different cultures and religions. While pupils are respectful of these differences they do not yet have a deep enough understanding of cultures other than their own.

Staff share leaders' determination to provide a high-quality education for all pupils. They say that leaders consider their workload and well-being.

The trust board provides effective support when needed. Leaders and governors work with colleagues from other schools in the trust. They share what each school does well and learn from each other. The local governing committee know the school well. They provide the right level of challenge and support.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained to spot any signs that a pupil might be at risk. The designated safeguarding leader (DSL) responds swiftly to concerns. Leaders work with external

agencies so that pupils get the additional help they need.

Leaders make appropriate checks to ensure that anyone working in the school is safe to do so.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They can explain how to use the internet safely and know about the risks that strangers can pose. Pupils also learn how to stay safe near water. The police and the fire service help pupils to learn about staying safe outside of school.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The school's approach to the teaching of reading in key stage 2 has been recently introduced. Leaders should check how well this is being implemented to ensure that pupils continue to build their knowledge so that they achieve as well as they can by the end of key stage 2.
- The mathematics curriculum is well planned and provides opportunities for pupils to build on previous learning. They have daily opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills when problem solving, and reasoning about their work. Teachers should ensure that tasks are sufficiently challenging for pupils who are ready to move on. This is to enable pupils to achieve as well as they can.
- Leaders of some foundation subjects do not evaluate how well their subject is being implemented and how well pupils are achieving. Senior leaders should enable them to do this.
- Pupils' understanding of different cultures is not as well developed as leaders want. Leaders should continue with their plans to further develop this. This is to ensure that pupils are as prepared as possible for their future lives in modern Britain.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Park Hall Primary School, to be good in January 2016.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	142989
<b>Local authority</b>	Stoke-on-Trent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10111713
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	476
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Johnny Anderson
<b>Principal</b>	Georgina Frost
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.parkhallacademy.co.uk">www.parkhallacademy.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected as an academy

## Information about this school

- The school became an academy in November 2016.
- The predecessor school, Park Hall Primary School, was judged to be good in January 2016.
- The school has a breakfast and after-school club that is managed by the school.

## Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector met with the principal and vice principal. She also met with the chief executive officer, a representative of the trust and two members of the local governing committee. The lead inspector met with curriculum leaders, the early years leader and the special educational needs coordinator.
- Reading, mathematics and history were specifically considered as part of this inspection. The lead inspector visited lessons and looked at pupils' books with curriculum leaders. The lead inspector also met with pupils to talk about their learning.
- The lead inspector listened to a group of pupils read. She also met with some pupils to talk about their reading books.
- The lead inspector considered a range of documentation, including leaders' self-

evaluation, improvement plans and documents relating to safeguarding. The single central record was checked to ensure that recruitment and vetting procedures are completed.

- The lead inspector considered the 48 responses to Parent View including the 26 free-text responses. She also spoke to parents informally on the playground.
- The lead inspector considered the 30 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and the 71 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

Jo Evans, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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