

# Inspection of a good school: Simpson's Lane Academy

Sycamore Avenue, Knottingley, West Yorkshire WF11 0PL

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Inspection dates:

11–12 December 2019

## **Outcome**

Simpson's Lane Academy continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy coming to school. This is seen from the very positive way in which they conduct themselves, and from their strong attitudes to learning. Pupils feel safe and happy in school and their parents largely agree.

Behaviour is good. Lessons are rarely disrupted, so pupils can make the most of their learning opportunities. Bullying is rare. If it does happen, it is dealt with effectively and quickly. A very small minority of parents believe that bullying takes place more often than it does. When parents report a concern, it is listened and responded to effectively. Some parents feel that leaders do not listen to their concerns.

The facilities in the school are exceptional. The 'immersion suite' is particularly impressive. It enhances pupils' understanding of the wider world. It can simulate different experiences, such as getting on a train or a plane, or living in an historic setting. These special opportunities supplement pupils' personal development well.

Pupils have a very clear understanding of the need for tolerance and respect of difference. They also understand the value of talking about things that worry them. There are strong systems in place to support pupils' mental well-being.

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

Reading is taught well. Phonics teaching starts immediately as children start school. Children's learning needs are well understood thanks to regular and accurate assessment. All adults who teach phonics are well trained. They plan lessons that meet children's needs closely. This means that any gaps in children's phonics knowledge are quickly filled. All of this means that children make good progress and learn to read from an early age.

Books match pupils' reading skills well. There is a wide range of books on offer, which are carefully matched to pupils' phonics knowledge. This helps pupils to practise their reading and become confident to use their phonics skills. Teachers also makes sure that pupils

apply their phonics skills when writing. As a result, pupils do well in reading and writing in key stage 1 and 2.

Leaders and staff skilfully promote a love of reading. This inspires pupils to improve their reading. There is a very well stocked library, which is a calm and peaceful environment. It motivates pupils to take their time to choose a new book and to read. Parents are also encouraged to come into school. Together with their children, they choose books they can read at home. The school models reading at bedtime. They hold sessions in the evening where children and their parents can come and read as a group. Pupils love these opportunities and parents also appreciate them.

Mathematics is well taught. The curriculum is very well constructed. Mathematical learning is sequenced coherently to support pupils' skills and knowledge development. Assessment is regular and purposeful. It leads to pupils completing activities that are challenging for them. This supports their strong progress. Where pupils need extra support, particularly pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), they have access to useful resources. These help pupils to work through problems with increasing independence. Pupils with SEND get appropriate extra support from adults when they need it. As a result of strong teaching and planning, pupils' needs are met well.

Subject leadership, particularly in history, is improving thanks to the support from experts in the trust. Schemes of work cover key subject-specific skills and knowledge well. Teachers have had more training in this area recently. This has led to stronger teaching and assessment. The 'immersive suite' helps to make learning real for pupils, which makes it more memorable. In some classes, history teaching is strong. Pupils develop their history skills and knowledge well. Occasionally, teaching is not so well planned. Teachers do not always check pupils' recall of previous learning. Activities for the most able pupils are not always well matched to their abilities.

Staff feel well cared for. There is lots of relevant training to support staff, in different roles, to do their job well. This helps staff feel valued. Staff also report that they are listened to by leaders. Leaders work effectively to reduce staff workload where appropriate. They make sure that systems are efficient.

Attendance is below average and a higher than average proportion of pupils are persistently absent. The school has worked effectively over the past 12 months to improve this.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff and governor safeguarding training takes place on a regular basis. This makes sure that all staff know their responsibilities around keeping children safe. There are clear systems for reporting and recording any safeguarding concerns. Leaders make sure that staff, parents and pupils know the local safeguarding risks.

Robust checks are made on all people who work and volunteer in school. The checks are well maintained on the single central register.

All staff know pupils well. They know who may be at greater risk. Leaders report concerns swiftly. They work with external agencies to make sure that pupils and families get the support they need.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in different situations. For example, pupils know how to stay safe when using the internet. They also know the potential dangers in their community and how to avoid them.

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

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

- Continue to develop the curriculum so that in all subject areas there is high-quality implementation of the curriculum planning and assessment arrangements. Leaders need to ensure that assessment is pertinent and helps teachers to support all pupils, especially the most able, to reach the standards they are capable of.
- Subject leaders receive strong support and training from the trust to improve their skills in developing the curriculum. Leaders must continue to engage with this support from the trust so that they continue improving their skills in leading the curriculum.
- Continue to improve attendance and reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent.

## **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 second section 8 inspection since we judged Simpson's Lane Academy to be good on 29–30 May 2012.

## **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>	138535
<b>Local authority</b>	Wakefield
<b>Inspection number</b>	10110810
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	353
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of Governors</b>	Pam Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sophie Taylor
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.simpsonslane.org.uk">www.simpsonslane.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16 March 2016

## Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average.
- The school is part of the Delta multi-academy trust.

## Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher and several senior and middle leaders throughout the inspection. I met with several teaching staff, office staff and kitchen staff. I also met with the deputy chief executive officer and other trustees.
- A meeting was held with leaders who have responsibility for safeguarding. Documents around processes and policies relating to pupils' safety were also checked. I also checked records of staff recruitment and staff training.
- I agreed with the headteacher to carry out a review of mathematics, reading and history as part of the inspection. Together with curriculum leaders, we completed connected inspection activities that included lesson visits, work scrutiny and discussion

with leaders, pupils and teachers.

- I spoke to 12 parents at the start of the school day. I considered the four text responses from parents. There were not enough responses from parents to consider their views on Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View. I also reviewed responses from staff and pupil surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Fiona McNally, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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