

Inspection of a good school: Half Acres Primary Academy

Temple Street, Castleford, West Yorkshire WF10 5RE

Inspection dates:

7–8 January 2020

Outcome

Half Acres Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders expect the best from all pupils. Pupils learn important knowledge and skills in many subjects. The curriculum develops pupils' wider understanding of the world. Pupils regularly discuss world events. This makes pupils curious about the world around them. Leaders enrich the curriculum with trips and visits. Parents appreciate this. Leaders help pupils to understand the importance of friendship, tolerance and respect. This contributes to good standards of behaviour and a happy environment. Bullying is rare. Pupils learn without interruption. Pupils feel safe in school. Parents who made their views known agree with this. Teachers support pupils who need extra help with their social and emotional development. Teachers also make pupils aware of future careers. They also give pupils leadership opportunities. This gives pupils responsibility and independence. Pupils feel that adults are fair and consistent. Adults provide pupils with a positive model of how to treat one another. This develops respectful attitudes that prepare pupils well for their next stage of learning and future life.

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

Reading is taught well. Phonics teaching begins when children arrive in Nursery. Pupils quickly apply their phonics knowledge in reading and writing. This helps children and pupils to read and write well. Adults use assessment accurately. They identify gaps in pupils' reading knowledge. Pupils get timely support to help them improve. Teachers reinforce previous learning before moving pupils on. Teachers ensure that reading books are matched to pupils' reading abilities.

Leaders and teachers develop pupils' love of reading. Adults read to their class every day. Adults read stories well and ask questions which prompt curiosity. This helps pupils to develop preferences for different types of stories and authors.

The mathematics curriculum is applied well. Teachers ensure that important skills and knowledge are taught in a logical way. Teachers break down key concepts in mathematics in a way that supports pupils' understanding. Teachers have strong subject knowledge.

This helps them to plan activities which match pupils' needs. Teachers revisit previous learning. This enables pupils to recall what they have learned before applying it to new learning. Leaders check how well the mathematics curriculum is applied. Leaders, and the trust, provide strong support and training in mathematics. Leaders make sure that the mathematics curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. This includes disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils achieve well in mathematics. This represents an improvement over the past 12 months.

The geography curriculum is well sequenced. Teachers cover the curriculum in a coherent way. Teachers know what pupils have learned before, and what they will learn next. Teachers' planning of the curriculum has also ensured that pupils' use of geographical language has improved. Some teachers' subject knowledge in geography is less developed. Sometimes, the work expected of pupils is too easy. This can mean that teachers focus is on general skills, such as writing, rather than on geographical knowledge. On occasions, teaching does not build on pupils' use of geographical skills. For example, pupils use the internet to ask what rivers there are in an area, rather than using a map. Leaders are aware of these issues, as is the trust, and training is in place to address this. Where gaps in subject knowledge appear, the trust has provided effective support for subject leaders. This has supported ongoing improvements to the planning of the curriculum.

Leaders make sure that pupils develop wider understanding. They teach pupils about different faiths and cultures. Pupils also learn about the importance of equality law and the protected characteristics in society. This work gives pupils an understanding of British values.

Staff feel valued. They are supported by leaders, governors and the trust. Leaders ask staff about their workload and well-being. Where appropriate, the school has reduced workload. Staff feel training is helpful, making their jobs easier and more enjoyable.

Adults ensure that children are safe and happy in the early years. They provide an environment that supports children's development. The curriculum and learning activities are well planned. Children learn to read from their arrival in Nursery. Adults support children with their speech and language development. They also develop children's social skills by teaching them to share and take turns. Staff develop strong relationships with children. This helps children to settle quickly. Parents who shared their views found staff approachable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders check the suitability of adults working with children. Leaders provide staff with regular training on pupils' safety and welfare. Staff know what to do if they have a safeguarding concern. Governors receive training on their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. Staff go through a thorough induction process when they start at school, so they understand the safeguarding systems. The school liaises with external agencies when necessary, to seek specialist support.

Leaders teach pupils about safeguarding issues. For example, they ensure pupils know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. Staff provide safeguarding information for pupils and parents on the website.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are some inconsistencies in the application of the geography curriculum. Although plans are in place, there is variability in how well they are implemented. Leaders should develop strong subject expertise so that teachers can plan activities which develop pupils' geographical knowledge.
- Leaders, and the trust, should continue to develop subject leaders' knowledge in order to further enhance the quality of the curriculum.

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, Half Acres Primary School, to be good.

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 the school and 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

Unique reference number	144332
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10121762
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	284
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Clifford Robertson
Headteacher	Sue Gardiner
Website	www.halfacres.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is average.
- The school is part of the Inspire Multi-Academy Trust.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, the academy was led by an acting headteacher, Rachael Taylor.
- I met with the acting 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 chief executive officer and other trustees, as well as governors.
- 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 geography 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 took into account the views of the 180 parents who responded to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 42 who submitted free-text responses. I also talked to eight parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Fiona McNally, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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