

Inspection of High Park School

Thorn Lane, Heaton, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD9 6RY

Inspection dates: 28–29 January 2020

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

High Park is a rapidly improving school. Staff have a very good understanding of pupils' complex needs. They provide pupils with exemplary levels of care. Pupils are happy at the school and are safe. They build trusting relationships with staff and are keen to come to school.

Pupils benefit from exceptional levels of support for their emotional health and well-being. This helps pupils to regulate their own behaviour. During their time at the school, pupils gain a strong sense of who they are and how to interact with others. There is no evidence to indicate that bullying ever happens.

Staff focus on preparing pupils for life after school. Pupils benefit from a broad range of opportunities to enhance their personal development. Pupils take part in many opportunities to learn away from the school site. For example, pupils go swimming, and some run a café in the community.

Staff have high hopes for all pupils. Pupils are helped to become more independent as soon as they join the school. Older pupils spend much of their time preparing for adulthood.

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

Staff plan and deliver the curriculum with the needs of every pupil in mind. They assess what pupils know and can do effectively. They use this information to adapt the curriculum for each pupil.

The development of pupils' language and communication is exemplary. Pupils make small and important steps in the way that they communicate with others. Sometimes this involves pupils being able to maintain eye contact with a member of staff. At other times, it involves pupils forming a simple sentence either verbally or with symbols. All pupils make great strides in their ability to communicate. This includes pupils who are non-verbal or have limited speech.

The curriculum is less well planned for the small proportion of pupils who access a more formal curriculum. These pupils benefit from strong personal development. This includes help for the way that they interact with others. However, their learning in different subjects is less effective. This is because subject leaders have not given enough thought to the content or order of pupils' learning. Pupils have limited opportunities to gain qualifications. Teachers do not do enough to develop pupils' reading.

Staff treat pupils with compassion and dignity. Staff are attentive to the needs of every pupil. They deal with the underlying causes for pupils' anxiety or distress well. They de-escalate situations expertly. They establish routines that enable pupils to flourish. Pupils' well-being and behaviour improve dramatically during their time at the school.

Pupils take part in an extensive range of opportunities to enhance their personal development. Pupils learn about how people are similar and different. They learn about different cultures and festivals. The school ensures that pupils lead active social lives. For example, the school runs a roller-disco for pupils and their families.

Staff help pupils to develop interests and hobbies. Some pupils have identified sporting and musical talents that they never knew they had. Staff help pupils to maintain their physical health. They build regular physical activity into pupils' daily routines. A dietitian also works with families to ensure that pupils eat a balanced and nutritious diet.

Older pupils spend more of their time preparing for adulthood than those who are younger. For example, they learn to complete domestic chores such as cleaning and cooking. They also spend more of their time away from school and in the community. Students in the sixth form become more confident in a range of social situations, such as when using public transport. A number of social workers work solely with pupils in Year 9 upwards. They work closely with staff to plan and manage students' transition out of the school. All students proceed to the most appropriate available destinations.

Leaders' work with parents and carers is exemplary. Staff go the extra mile to support families. Parents appreciate this work hugely. Many credit the school for transforming the lives of their children and other family members.

Leaders have established a highly motivated staff team. Staff share leaders' moral conviction and their determination to do their best for pupils and their families.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff receive regular training on different matters relating to pupils' safety. They are skilled at helping pupils to communicate anything that is worrying them.

Pupils gain an understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils develop a clear understanding of what behaviour is acceptable in public. Staff help pupils to understand the consequences of their actions. They explain how different behaviours can put them at risk.

Leaders work well with a range of external agencies, such as health professionals and the police, to keep pupils safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have made significant improvements to the school, including to the curriculum. However, the curriculum is not as well planned as it could be for the

small proportion of pupils who access a more formal curriculum. This limits the learning of these pupils. Leaders should therefore think carefully about what they want these pupils to know, understand and be able to do in different subjects. They should also think deeply about the order in which these pupils should learn new things. Where appropriate, pupils should have more opportunities to gain qualifications. This will increase the range of options that are available to them when they leave the school.

- Many aspects of the school's work to develop pupils' language and communication are exemplary. However, the teaching of English to the small group of most-able pupils is not as ambitious as it could be. In particular, the curriculum does not promote pupils' early reading well enough. This restricts some pupils' wider learning. Leaders must therefore develop their approach to the teaching of reading. Where appropriate, teachers should build pupils' knowledge of phonics more systematically. They should also do more to promote a love of reading.

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	143533
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	10121660
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	115
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	23
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sue White
Principal	Ann Andrew
Website	www.highpark.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the Interaction and Communication Academy Trust in April 2017.
- The school caters for pupils with complex special educational needs and/or disabilities. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Pupils have complex needs relating to language and communication, including autism spectrum disorder. Most have additional needs. Many pupils join the school having spent time in different special schools.
- There are currently very few children in the early years.
- A group of pupils attend Keighley College, with staff from the school, on a part-time basis. The school also uses Thornwood Farm as an alternative provider for a very small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- During the inspection, we spoke formally with a group of pupils about school life. We also spoke to pupils during lessons. Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers, including those who are new to the profession. We met with members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors, who is also a member of the trust board.
- We reviewed documentation, which included leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- We considered the views expressed by parents in the 54 responses to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, as well as the 18 comments received via the text-facility. We considered the 56 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupils' questionnaire. We also met with a group of parents.
- The inspection focused deeply on mathematics, music and personal, social, health and economic education. It also focused on English and how the school develops pupils' language and communication. In these subjects, we met with subject leaders, visited lessons, met with teaching staff and looked at pupils' work.
- We reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding, including the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff, records relating to safeguarding pupils and staff training records.

Inspection team

Will Smith, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jo Sharpe

Her Majesty's Inspector

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