

# Inspection of a good school: Shibden Head Primary Academy

Hainsworth Moor Grove, Queensbury, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD13 2ND

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Inspection dates: 10–11 March 2020

## Outcome

Shibden Head Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that one or more areas may be declining, as set out below.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy Shibden Head Primary Academy and would recommend it to other children. They respect each other, try hard in lessons and want everyone to get along together. Pupils are proud of their school. They are keen to take on a range of responsibilities. For example, older pupils help younger children at lunchtimes and check on energy usage.

Leaders give all pupils opportunities to thrive. Whatever the weather, pupils relish physical activities outdoors at breaktimes. At lunchtimes, pupils enjoy a convivial atmosphere, talking as they eat. Parents of pupils who have recently joined the school value the support their children receive. The headteacher and staff focus closely upon pupils' personal development, welfare and behaviour. This is evident in the positive culture in and around the school.

Pupils enjoy their lessons. Older pupils say that their favourite subject is science; a subject in which the school has gained national awards. The youngest children enjoy school too. However, some pupils do not get off to a consistently good start in their reading, writing and mathematics.

Staff deal sensibly with those rare occasions when pupils with additional behaviour needs become upset and disturb the general calm. Pupils follow the example set by the headteacher and staff to be kind and helpful friends.

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

Staff say that Shibden Head Primary Academy is a happy place to work and are positive about being part of the Focus Academy Trust. The leaders of the trust work closely with the headteacher to identify what needs to improve. Staff like working with other trust schools and sharing their expertise. This has led to improved curriculum planning in subjects such as geography, design and technology and music. However, while working

within the wider priorities of the trust, leaders need to be more precise in identifying the root causes beneath some stubborn trends in pupils' progress.

Governors ask school leaders regularly about pupils' progress and standards. Leaders have worked hard to develop an engaging curriculum for younger pupils. However, they have not established how well it enables them to build firm foundations for future success. For example, in Reception and key stage 1, staff do not ensure that pupils learn to write numerals accurately. This results in too many older pupils writing numerals incorrectly, which leads to mistakes in their calculations. Some older pupils struggle to make sense of equivalent fractions. This is linked to their weak knowledge of multiplication tables and division. Leaders have recently introduced a new mathematics scheme. Staff are confident this is helping them to identify and close gaps in pupils' knowledge. It is supporting them to plan and sequence the curriculum logically.

The headteacher has rightly identified reading as an area for improvement. Staff encourage a love of reading. They choose books to read aloud that pupils enjoy. This develops pupils' vocabulary and supports the wider curriculum work well. Pupils who can read fluently benefit from the research tasks they are set in subjects like science. They interpret information from books and online well. However, the curriculum for early reading, including phonics, is not well constructed or taught. As a result, some pupils do not learn to read fluently enough to access the wider curriculum.

The school uses a variety of methods to teach early reading. These mixed methods are not linked closely enough to a well-structured phonics programme. Some beginner readers are given reading books that are far too difficult. These books include sounds and words they have not been taught. This means they do not develop the confidence to read accurately or with fluency. Whiteboards and large felt-tip pens are used by children to write letters and words in phonics lessons. This does not aid their handwriting or their memory of what they have learned previously. Staff do not identify pupils who fall behind in their phonics knowledge quickly or accurately enough. This means that pupils are well behind others by the end of Year 1. It is difficult for them to catch up.

Some subjects are very well planned and taught. Science lessons are popular with older pupils. During the inspection, pupils were studying the heart, blood and circulatory system. Their knowledge and interest in the subject matter was impressive. Teaching in science strikes a good balance between telling pupils information, helping them to research and testing their hypotheses. The school has recently introduced 'floor books' to record work in most subjects. Pupils enjoy looking at these books, which remind them about what they have already learned. They are a creative way to support pupils' knowledge retention and interest across the wider curriculum.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well by staff. The school is inclusive. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) supports staff well to plan for the increasing number of pupils with complex behaviour difficulties. In discussion with the headteacher, we agreed that the curriculum for reading, combined with the teaching of letter and number formation, may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The headteacher and staff know pupils, their families and the community well. They are mindful of any changes in pupils' behaviour that may raise concern over their welfare. Leaders communicate well with parents and external partners to support pupils' well-being. The SENCo is assiduous in keeping track of any pupils who may be in need, collating information and making referrals. Parents appreciate the support she provides. Leaders have clear systems in place to keep pupils safe. Regular assemblies on keeping safe online, at home or when out and about, contribute to pupils' secure knowledge of how to keep themselves safe from harm.

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

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

- The curriculum for early reading, including phonics, is not taught systematically. This means some children and pupils make a slow start to their reading and writing. Leaders should think more carefully about what pupils need to know and remember, including the links between correct letter formation and writing posture. To make sure that younger pupils get off to a better start in their reading, leaders should ensure staff are well trained in teaching early reading, audit the reading books and sequence them to support pupils' increasing phonics knowledge. Phonics lessons need to be streamlined to focus on what pupils need to know and remember. Pupils also need to have enough practice time to ensure their phonics knowledge is secure and access to suitable resources to help improve the quality of their handwriting.
- Leaders are aware that there have been weaknesses in the mathematics curriculum. These have contributed to gaps in pupils' knowledge in areas such as multiplication and division. Leaders have made a good start to the introduction of a new mathematics curriculum. They now need to ensure that children can form numerals correctly. They also need to teach pupils to set out calculations properly. As they implement the new curriculum, teachers need to check that pupils have learned number facts correctly. This will help pupils to tackle more complex mathematics as they progress through school.

## 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 or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence 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

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139358
<b>Local authority</b>	Bradford
<b>Inspection number</b>	10121863
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	410
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Clive Davies OBE
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sarah Thornton
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.shibdenheadprimaryacademy.co.uk">www.shibdenheadprimaryacademy.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 July 2016

## Information about this school

- The school joined the Focus Academy Trust in March 2013.

## Information about this inspection

- I met with trust leaders, governors, the headteacher, senior leaders and staff.
- I looked at reading, mathematics and science in detail. In each subject, I visited lessons, held discussions with leaders and staff, talked to pupils, looked at their work and observed some pupils reading to adults. I spoke to pupils in and around the school to hear their views. I ate lunch with pupils in the hall and observed them at play inside and outside.
- To look closely at safeguarding, I spoke to pupils, staff and governors. I looked at safeguarding documentation, including the school's single central record, which contains details of recruitment checks.
- I considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including free-text responses. I also considered the views of pupils and staff who completed the Ofsted survey.

## Inspection team

Gill Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector

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