

# Inspection of Park Vale Academy

Top Valley Drive, Top Valley, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG5 9AZ

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Inspection dates: 15–16 July 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

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

Pupils learn more in key stage 4 than they do in key stage 3. In some subjects, such as modern foreign languages, pupils know and remember more and teachers know what pupils have learned. However, this is not the case in every subject. Senior leaders are working with subject leaders to make the curriculum more consistent.

Pupils like the houses that they belong to. They say that they would turn to the house leaders for support if they had a problem. They value the house point rewards system. They are looking forward to trips and visits starting again.

Most pupils concentrate well in lessons. Adults build positive relationships with pupils. However, some pupils have not settled back well on returning to school. Not all pupils come to school as regularly as they should, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pastoral staff, a school nurse and a school counsellor provide support for pupils. Pupils value this. Most pupils that we spoke with felt safe in school. They said that staff take bullying seriously and deal with problems that arise. However, some pupils do not think that their concerns are addressed well.

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

The quality of education is inconsistent. Pupils do not learn well across the whole curriculum. Leaders place a strong emphasis on the key stage 4 curriculum. Pupils gain less knowledge in key stage 3. In some subjects, teachers do not know what pupils know and what they have forgotten.

Subject leaders are developing more rigorous curriculum plans. Staff have had better training so that they will know exactly what to teach. Teachers use strategies in lessons to help pupils to remember more over time. Pupils find this helpful. Disadvantaged pupils are learning more and achieving better outcomes.

Leaders have introduced a pledge system. This identifies the personal qualities they want pupils to develop. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures in religious education. They discuss the importance of equality during tutor times. Careers education matches pupils' individual needs. This guidance helped all Year 11 pupils progress to education, training and employment in summer 2020.

Leaders set high expectations for behaviour. Teachers and pupils typically treat one another with respect. Many pupils behave well. However, some do not. Incidents of exclusion for poor behaviour have risen. After a period of ongoing improvement, pupils' attendance has declined since the start of the pandemic. In response, leaders have made behaviour and attendance a renewed focus. They recently provided behaviour training from a national expert for all staff. Leaders want behaviour and

attendance to improve. They are working with a specialist provider to help them with this.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities get extra help. Teachers adapt the curriculum to meet their needs. Most pupils value this support. However, some pupils, and their parents, do not feel that they get the right help. For too many pupils with SEND, attendance remains low.

As restrictions have lifted, on-site parents' meetings and visits for new Year 7 pupils have started again. Despite this, some parents believe communication and behaviour could be improved.

Teachers are helping weaker readers catch up. They try to help pupils build their vocabulary and read more fluently. Teachers encourage all pupils to read in daily reading sessions. However, not all pupils enjoy what they are reading. Some struggle to concentrate during these sessions.

Leaders consider the well-being of staff. They provide regular training to build staff's expertise. Most staff have benefited from this training. Leaders have acted to manage workload with regard to delivering remote education. Despite this, many staff feel that their workload remains high.

Governors take their responsibilities seriously. They improve their expertise through training. They know the school increasingly well. Governors check that external reviews of the school's work are making a difference. They make sure that they act on any areas for improvement.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have built a strong safeguarding team. This team works with pastoral staff to support pupils' welfare. Staff are alert to concerns, which have increased in number. They record these in detail and act promptly. Leaders train all staff well on safeguarding issues. They have developed effective links with safeguarding partners to support pupils' safety. Staff teach pupils about safety through the curriculum and in assemblies. Leaders carry out thorough checks on the suitability of adults working at the school. Governors are well trained on safeguarding issues.

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

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

- The planning and sequencing of the curriculum is weaker in some subjects than in others. This is particularly evident at key stage 3 where pupils do not always learn subjects in sufficient depth. Leaders should ensure that pupils experience a

high-quality curriculum across all subjects. In doing so, they should ensure that key stage 3 pupils acquire greater depth of knowledge.

- The implementation of the curriculum is variable. This has led to pupils making weaker progress in the curriculum in some subjects than in others. In some cases, teachers do not securely check that pupils have understood important concepts. This leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Leaders should ensure that teachers' use of assessment enables them to check that pupils have acquired the knowledge and skills intended in the taught curriculum.
- Pupils' behaviour and attendance have shown a decline this year. Leaders have found it difficult to re-establish routines with some pupils after the disruption brought about by COVID-19 (coronavirus). Leaders are aware of this. They have introduced whole-school training on behaviour management. They are working with external partners to support pupils at risk of exclusion. Leaders now need to ensure that these new approaches reduce exclusions and improve attendance.

## 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 [here](#).

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>	144487
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10184550
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	840
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Steve Hopkins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Steve Bowhay
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.parkvaleacademy.org.uk">www.parkvaleacademy.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	8 and 9 May and 19 June 2019 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to the membership of the local governing body.
- The senior leadership team has been restructured. New leaders have been recruited to add further capacity.
- The school provides alternative education provision for 10 pupils at the following providers: Cast Social Enterprise; Equip; Home and Hospital Education; Rise; Sherwood Education Base; and Stone Soup.
- Year 11 pupils left school on 11 June 2021.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held several discussions with the headteacher and senior leaders. They also talked to a wide range of staff, including subject leaders and pastoral staff.
- Inspectors looked in detail into the curriculum in English, history, modern foreign languages, physical education and science. They talked to leaders and teachers about their curriculum plans. They also talked to pupils about what they knew and remembered in these subjects. They also looked at pupils' work and visited lessons.
- Inspectors talked to members of the local governing body, including a representative from the board of trustees, to find out how they support and challenge school leaders.
- Inspectors talked to the chief executive officer of The Redhill Academy Trust and the executive headteacher to explore the actions taken to improve the school.
- Inspectors checked safeguarding arrangements. They looked at the school's work to make staff and pupils aware of safeguarding issues. They also looked at safeguarding records to see how concerns over pupils' safety are recorded and followed up. Inspectors also looked at the checks made on the suitability of staff working at the school.
- An inspector visited pupils attending one of the alternative education providers used by the school.
- Inspectors talked to a wide range of pupils to gather their views on school life.

## Inspection team

Malcolm Kirtley, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Edwards	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Monk	Ofsted Inspector
Rakesh Patel	Her Majesty's Inspector
Peter Stonier	Her Majesty's Inspector

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