

Inspection of a good school: Abbey Park Academy

Keighley Close, Illingworth, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX2 9DG

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 September 2022

Outcome

Abbey Park Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are thriving at Abbey Park. They are encouraged to show respect, resilience, responsibility and reflection. This helps pupils to develop good character. One of the ways that pupils learn to reflect is through the 'expectations for learning' policy. If pupils are unkind to others, they are encouraged to reflect on how their behaviour has made the other pupils feel. Pupils think about how they could have solved the problem without upsetting anyone. They reflect on the impact of their actions. They apologise. This helps everyone to feel happy and safe at school.

There is very little bullying. Most parents and carers are satisfied with leaders' response if their child is bullied. A small number of parents are not. The new principal is aware that some parents would like leaders to improve communication with parents.

Pupils look forward to 'Proud Thursday'. Teachers choose pupils to share their good work with school leaders. The culture of praise inspires pupils to try their hardest in lessons.

Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They behave well in lessons. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and learning. Pupils are rising to the challenge.

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

Leaders in the multi-academy trust expect all schools to follow the trust's policies and curriculum plans. The trust's curriculum plans reduce teachers' workload.

Teachers have excellent subject knowledge in English and mathematics. These subjects are taught well in every year group. Pupils are achieving well in these subjects.

Staff are expert teachers of early reading and phonics. Every class has a reading map that encourages pupils to read widely. Pupils have a reading passport, and they enjoy getting stickers for reading each new book. Pupils who complete the reading map are allowed to

go and choose a book from the vending machine. This is very exciting and helps pupils to associate reading with fun and enjoyment.

The mathematics curriculum is equally successful. Teachers use assessment skilfully to identify any gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge. Right from the start, staff make sure that children in the early years learn numbers and numerical patterns quickly. Teachers take every opportunity to embed this learning. For example, the teacher in Reception Year puts counters up on the flip chart when taking the register every day. Everyone counts together how many children are in school each day. This daily practice is helping children learn to count verbally beyond 20.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has expert specialist knowledge. Leaders have trained teaching assistants to use diagnostic tests. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) take the test that is relevant to their specific learning difficulty. For example, the working memory test identifies whether pupils with SEND have difficulties with visual, sequential or numerical memory. Leaders give teachers ideas about how they can adapt their lessons to meet pupils' specific learning needs. Teachers present information in the way that is most helpful for each pupil with SEND. This is helping pupils with SEND to make good progress in English and mathematics.

In September, leaders at Abbey Park introduced new curriculum plans in art and design, history and geography. In preparation for this, leaders provided training on the new plans during the preceding summer term. Teachers are still getting to grips with these curriculum plans.

Teachers' subject knowledge is variable in foundation subjects. In some cases, it is not good enough. As a result, teachers sometimes provide work for pupils that is not suitable. Pupils in key stage 1 do not have the building blocks they need to complete the work that is set successfully.

Pupils behave well in lessons. Pupils are regularly reminded to show respect for others. The curriculum for pupils' broader development is a strength of the school. Pupils can remember what they have learned about different faiths and cultures. The multi-academy trust 'twins' schools within the trust to extend pupils' experience of cultural diversity. Pupils in Year 5 have exchange visits to meet pupils from their twinned school. There are inter-school sports competitions within the trust. Pupils in Abbey Park took first place in the summer 2022 athletics tournament.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that all staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

Leaders keep a note of staff attendance at meetings when safeguarding updates are given. The well-being and attendance officer provides additional training for any staff who were absent. This ensures that all staff training is up to date.

The pupil support, well-being and attendance officers follow up concerns that staff raise about pupils with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). The well-being and attendance officer attends meetings with child protection professionals if these meetings are scheduled during school holiday periods.

Staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders are at an early stage of implementing curriculum plans in foundation subjects. Teachers' subject knowledge is variable in these subjects. Teachers sometimes set work that does not enable pupils to achieve the aims and ambition of the wider curriculum. Leaders should provide effective support to improve teachers' subject knowledge.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2017.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

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	140172
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10240403
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	215
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mark Sanders OBE
Executive Principal	James Howard
Principal	James Laughton
Website	https://apa.northerneducationtrust.org/
Dates of previous inspection	20 and 21 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is sponsored by Northern Education Trust.
- The principal took up post in September 2022.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in this evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met the principal, the executive principal, the SENCo and other senior leaders. The reading, mathematics and geography subject leaders also met the inspector. The deputy chief executive of the multi-academy trust met the inspector, representing the chief executive.

- A meeting was held with three of the school's governors, including the chair of the local governing body. One of the trustees spoke to the inspector separately.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading and phonics, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety were evaluated on arrival at school, at breakfast club, in the dining room and at breaktimes. The inspector also met the pupil support team.
- Senior safeguarding leaders met the inspector to discuss recruitment and safeguarding records.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection. The inspector also reviewed Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and survey responses from staff. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- Pupils in Year 6 were off site attending a residential visit during this inspection.

Inspection team

Tracey Ralph, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022