

Inspection of a good school: Castleford Park Junior Academy

Medley Street, Castleford, West Yorkshire WF10 4BB

Inspection dates:

9 and 10 April 2024

Outcome

Castleford Park Junior Academy continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Kathryn Law. This school is part of Castleford Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, George Panayiotou, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Adam Fletcher.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend Castleford Park Junior Academy. Pupils settle well when they start in Year 3 because the school has established a carefully structured, successful transition programme for pupils.

Pupils benefit from the wide range of enrichment activities such as tag rugby, sewing, musical theatre, Spanish club, sign language, baking and Lego club. Pupils are proactive in their leadership roles within the school council, sports council or eco council. For example, pupil councillors raised funds to purchase reusable water bottles and they encouraged their peers to choose reusable cups. Digital leaders go to their partner infant schools to lead internet safety sessions.

Pupils relish opportunities within the curriculum to develop their practical skills and knowledge. Pupils grew maize in forest school, ground it, then made tortillas to eat. Pupils made life-size buggies in design and technology, then applied the knowledge and skills to make go-karts.

The school builds trusting relationships with families. Pupils behave extremely well. Relationships between staff and pupils are caring and supportive. This helps pupils to feel happy and safe in school.

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

The school has designed a highly ambitious curriculum. Subject leaders access high-quality professional development to develop their expertise. Across the school, and in the Year 6 published outcomes, pupils achieve well. The school uses research evidence to

inform its work. Some recent staff training on adaptive teaching has helped the school to refine the curriculum offer in every subject. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well because of the highly inclusive culture, and effective curriculum adaptations. As a result, most pupils with SEND can access the same lessons as their peers. Parents and carers of pupils with SEND appreciate the high expectations that staff have for their children. By the time they reach Year 6, most pupils achieve at least as well as they should for their age, with an increasing number surpassing this standard.

Most pupils behave well in lessons. A few pupils have specific difficulties with controlling their emotions, but they are supported well. Staff teach pupils to use different strategies that help them to self-regulate. Staff identify individual behaviour triggers for each pupil, so that these can be prevented. The wider inclusion team provides social communication interventions and Lego therapy. They offer additional support outside of the classroom if pupils need a sensory break. If a pupil with additional needs is upset to the point of crisis, the school makes sure that disruption to learning for other pupils is kept to a minimum. These episodes reduce as pupils learn the skills that they need to regulate their own behaviour.

The school assesses reading with Year 3 pupils when they join the school. Any struggling readers are quickly and accurately identified. Phonics lessons start in the second week of term. The school follows a bespoke phonics curriculum, providing reading books that match the sounds that pupils are learning. This combination helps pupils to catch up quickly.

The school has increased the range of books that are available for the most-able pupils. However, the stock of books remains insufficient to meet demand. Most-able pupils find many of the reading books on offer uninspiring. This is putting some pupils off reading. It is also slowing the progress that the most able pupils make and limiting pupils' opportunities to learn and use more complex vocabulary and sentence structures.

The curriculum for pupils' wider development is ambitious. The cultural curriculum is enriched by the wealth of specialists who visit the school. Pupils are exposed to a wide range of musical instruments, musical genres and musical theatre. Even the youngest pupils have an impressive knowledge of art that helps them to express their appreciation of different art forms knowledgeably.

Pupils have ample opportunities within the curriculum to learn about different faiths, cultures, democracy and rule of law. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of protected characteristics and equalities. Leaders promote fundamental British values carefully, to prepare pupils well to be knowledgeable and kind citizens.

Trustees value staff and strive to retain them. Staff feel valued because they are treated with respect by leaders. This includes the many steps leaders have taken to manage staff workload well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The reading books on offer for the most able pupils lack challenge. This can inhibit pupils' love of reading and limits the range of new vocabulary that pupils encounter. Most-able pupils are making insufficient progress in reading. They are not achieving as well as they should at the greater depth standard by the end of Year 6. Leaders should ensure that reading books are carefully matched to the abilities and needs of most-able pupils, to provide sufficient challenge, motivate interest and ensure success.

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 February 2019.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium](#)

funding (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	139359
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10323047
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	405
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Adam Fletcher
Headteacher	Kathryn Law
Website	www.pjacademy.net
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 February 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is one of three primary academies in Castleford Academy Trust. There are also two secondary schools in the trust.
- Pupils join the school in Year 3.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND equates to 30% of the school roll. This is well above the national average.
- The school delivers the early career teacher programme through the Education Teacher Hub, which is linked to the University College London accredited provider.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision. This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken this into account in her evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met the headteacher, the deputy headteachers, the assistant special educational needs coordinators and the inclusion manager. The art and design, reading and mathematics subject leaders met the inspector separately.
- A meeting was held with the chair of trustees along with several trustees and governors.
- The inspector held discussions with the chief executive and the director of primary for the trust.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspector 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.
- The inspector met with senior staff who lead the wider curriculum. The inspector also discussed this with pupils, including in single-sex groups.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety were evaluated at breakfast club, in lessons and at lunchtime.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector reviewed Ofsted Parent View and spoke to several parents before the start of the school day. The inspector also considered responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Tracey Ralph, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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