

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Towngate Primary Academy

Whitley Spring Road, Ossett, West Yorkshire WF5 0QA

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 October 2024

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Annabel Berry. This school is part of The Inspire Partnership Multi 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 (CEO), Matthew Knox, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John North.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school is typically described by parents and carers, pupils and staff as a 'special place'. It is a homely environment where pupils enjoy the calming music and subdued lighting. They feel safe. From the early years, pupils are nurtured and valued as individuals. Their behaviour is exemplary. They attend well and take pride in their achievements. There is a strong sense of community and high expectations for pupils. These are evident in the 'Towngate pathway' and the aspirational curriculum. Pupils are active and enthusiastic learners.

Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and respectful. Pupils know who to talk to if they have any difficulties or worries. They appreciate the different ways to do this. Staff model and promote positive behaviour. They deal with the rare incidents of poor behaviour effectively.

Pupils enjoy a wide variety of school clubs and activities, such as glee club, cheerleading, chess and sports competitions. These opportunities enrich the curriculum and motivate pupils to try something new. Pupils hold positions of responsibility. These opportunities are varied and wide-ranging. They include as members of the school council, mental health ambassadors and sports leaders. Pupils appreciate writing their reflections in their journals. They value the daily 'mindful moments' to support their positive mental health.

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

Leaders at all levels share a genuine ambition for the school to provide the absolute best for pupils. Curriculum subjects are continually reviewed and refined to ensure they meet pupils' needs well. Curriculum content builds and extends pupils' knowledge from the early years. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to practise and revisit important knowledge. Learning is purposeful. Pupils learn to apply their knowledge as skills. For example, in design and technology (DT), pupils use their knowledge of the work of successful civil engineers to create their own prototype model bridges.

The school utilises the support from the trust with exceptional skill. This is particularly the case with the teaching of early English and mathematics. The teaching of writing has been strengthened. Children in the early years develop the physical skills they need to write letters and numbers correctly. Writing for pupils in key stage 1 focuses precisely on the development of sentence structure, spelling and handwriting. Teachers model and explain relevant vocabulary clearly. Pupils learn to use and apply subject-specific language well, including in their writing. Pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged, achieve increasingly well.

Reading is at the forefront of the curriculum. Staff teach phonics very well. Children begin phonics in the early years. Nursery children are immersed in the joy of reading from the start. They relish listening to nursery rhymes and learning songs. Staff check pupils' progress in phonics regularly. They provide effective support, when necessary, to help pupils to keep up with the phonics programme. Books are prominent across the school. Pupils appreciate the Towngate 'Top Ten' recommended books for them to enjoy each term. Typically, pupils speak with enthusiasm about their favourite authors and books. They read every day and enjoy listening to stories adults read to them.

Pupils with SEND have their learning needs assessed and met very well. These pupils are encouraged to take an equal and active part in school life. Teachers make appropriate adaptations to learning when necessary. Effective support and resources help pupils to access the curriculum as independently as possible.

Children in the early years receive excellent care and support. The range and quality of activities and positive adult support promote children's imagination and critical thinking skills. Children learn to take risks and enjoy practising their early literacy and numeracy skills. They eagerly participate in the variety of learning opportunities available to them.

Pupils are prepared for life beyond school extremely well. They develop important life skills and participate in experiences that celebrate the joy of childhood exceptionally well. From the Nursery Year, there is a passionate and determined focus on raising pupils' aspirations and self-confidence. Pupils learn how to behave well through the school's 'character' curriculum. This equips them with the tools they need to socialise effectively and to respect the views of others. Pupils learn to recognise risks and how to keep themselves safe. They participate in enrichment activities, including trips linked to the curriculum, residential outdoor adventure experiences and musical performances.

The trust works proactively with governors to ensure that all aspects of the school are focused on the best interests of pupils. Staff enjoy working here. They benefit from high-quality training. School leaders are proud to share their expertise with colleagues working in other schools. Leaders are considerate of staff's welfare and workload. Staff speak very positively of the supportive school community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in July 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	143078
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10346603
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	299
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John North
CEO of the trust	Matthew Knox
Headteacher	Annabel Berry
Website	www.towngate.ipmat.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 July 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently make use of alternative provision.
- The school provides breakfast and after-school care.
- The school offers a variety of lunchtime and after-school enrichment clubs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher, who is also the special educational needs coordinator, several subject leaders, the attendance officer, the school business officer, the business operations

officer for the trust and members of the school's safeguarding team, including the learning mentor.

- The inspector met with the CEO and two trustees, including the chair. The inspector also met with the chair and vice-chair of the local governing board.
- The inspector focused inspection activity on the following groups of subjects: early English and mathematics, history, science and DT. For each group of subjects, the inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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' interest first.
- The inspector spoke to some parents informally at the start of the school day and met with some pupils and staff.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for parents and staff.

Inspection team

Stephanie Innes-Taylor, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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