

# Inspection of The Vale Primary Academy

Ferrybridge Road, Knottingley, West Yorkshire WF11 8JF

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Inspection dates:	3 and 4 December 2024
The quality of education	<b>Outstanding</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The head of academy of this school is Sally Cartwright. The school is part of Delta Academies 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), Paul Tarn and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Steven Peter Hodsman.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since May 2013. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

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

The Vale Academy helps pupils thrive. Staff create an exceptionally caring and welcoming environment. They prioritise the well-being of every individual. Together, they work to achieve the highest aspirations for all.

Relationships between staff and pupils are exceptionally strong. This nurtures a culture of ambition and trust. The enthusiasm pupils have for their learning reflects the inspiring atmosphere. The school is dedicated to promoting regular and punctual attendance. This ensures that pupils benefit from all the school has to offer.

Pupils consistently show positive behaviour, both in lessons and at social times. They show respect for their peers and staff, contributing to a harmonious and supportive school environment. Pupils take pride in their roles within the school community. They demonstrate a mature understanding of how they contribute positively to school life.

Pupils benefit from a broad, ambitious and expertly designed curriculum. The school, supported by the trust, meticulously reviews and enhances all subject areas. This ensures exceptional quality. Pupils experience lessons that are seamlessly sequenced and thoughtfully delivered. This ignites their curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. Pupils make remarkable progress, consistently exceeding expectations from their starting points.

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

The school has a rich and immersive reading environment. Staff weave a carefully curated list of books through all subjects. Story time, reading clubs and outdoor reading spaces further enhance pupils' engagement. As a result, pupils speak with infectious enthusiasm about favourite stories, characters and plots. This thoughtful approach leads to high levels of achievement. Pupils develop strong reading fluency and an enduring love for books.

Pupils learn to read quickly and fluently. The school has a systematic and structured phonics curriculum that starts in Reception. Children regularly read books with known sounds. This helps to build reading success. Children at risk of falling behind are quickly identified. Extra daily practice and tailored sessions help pupils catch up quickly. Staff are experts in teaching phonics. They are well supported by strong professional development and ongoing coaching. The school's commitment to building fluent readers positively impacts on reading comprehension.

The school offers an exceptionally high quality education across all subjects. This is a well structured and inclusive curriculum. It is designed to ensure that all pupils can access and progress effectively. The curriculum is sequenced thoughtfully. It builds upon prior learning well. The school and trust have purposefully and effectively integrated cross-subject links. For example, pupils learn about Mexico in geography before studying the Mayans in history. Pupils connect important concepts, learned over time, exceptionally

well. Any misconceptions are quickly addressed, this leads to pupils' strong progress through the curriculum. Pupils are rightly proud of the high-quality work they produce.

The school teaches and reinforces high expectations for behaviour. Staff use rewards and sanctions consistently and fairly. This builds a structured and respectful ethos. Some pupils display challenging behaviours. Staff are skilled at identifying and supporting these pupils through a targeted approach. This leads to marked improvements in behaviour over time.

From early years, children make an exceptional start. The well-resourced environment promotes independence, collaboration and problem-solving. Children choose activities where they learn essential knowledge and skills. They work with focus, for example designing and building constructions. Children experiment measuring and cutting lengths of tape to hold constructions together. Adults expertly guide learning, and teach and encourage independence.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully included. Strong partnerships with parents support all pupils effectively. Staff accurately identify pupils' needs, ensuring that all can engage with the curriculum. Pupils with SEND achieve exceptionally well from their starting points.

The school excels in preparing pupils to be ready for their next phase. Values like respect and responsibility are woven throughout the curriculum. Pupils have many leadership opportunities. Roles, such as 'money managers', give pupils a real-life understanding of financial responsibility. Inclusivity is a priority, ensuring pupils thrive. Carefully planned trips, visits and career activities broaden horizons. Learning is linked to real-life aspirations and future roles in society. The school's ambitious vision inspires pupils to reach their potential. It effectively equips them for life in modern Britain.

The trust actively supports the school, driving its success. High-quality professional development continually strengthens leadership and teaching. Trustees closely monitor progress and provide strong, constructive accountability for leaders. School leaders meet the trust's high expectations. They offer strong support to staff and prioritise their well-being. Staff appreciate the thoughtful steps taken to manage workload effectively.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138332
<b>Local authority</b>	Wakefield
<b>Inspection number</b>	10346444
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	217
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Steven Peter Hodsman
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Paul Tarn
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sally Cartwright
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thevpacademy.org.uk">www.thevpacademy.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	8 and 9 May 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is one of 57 schools in the Delta Academies Trust.
- The school has a higher-than-average number of pupils requiring SEND support.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning, listened to pupils read and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum and looked at work in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors 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.
- Inspectors met with the trust's senior executive principal, the head of academy, the associate CEO and other trust and school senior leaders.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the trustees, including the vice-chair.
- Throughout the inspection, the inspectors met with groups of staff and considered the opinions expressed through the staff survey.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents expressed through Ofsted Parent View and met parents at the school gate.

### **Inspection team**

Lesley Sullivan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sinead Fox

Ofsted Inspector

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