

Inspection of a good school: Ackton Pastures Primary Academy

College Grove, Whitwood, Castleford, West Yorkshire WF10 5NS

Inspection dates: 28–29 January 2020

Outcome

Ackton Pastures Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a friendly and happy school. Many pupils told me how much they love coming to the school. Pupils say that behaviour is good in the school and getting better. They are adamant that bullying is rare. Teachers deal swiftly with any misbehaviour. Pupils' attitudes are good. They work hard in lessons and achieve well. Teachers have high expectations for all pupils in school. Teachers want pupils to succeed in every area of school life. Pupils told me they want a good job and career in the future. Pupils spoke about how much they like their teachers. They say that they feel safe.

The school is a positive and bright place. Pupils benefit from the well-ordered and attractive school environment. Displays in classrooms, shared areas and corridors are of high quality. The learning environment celebrates pupils' good work and highlights important information for learning. Pupils are proud of their work and proud of their school. Parents are supportive of the school. One correctly stated that 'the new management and staff have pulled together to make this school work.'

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

The school benefits from having a skilled senior leadership team. Leaders are relentless in their efforts to ensure that the school constantly improves. All staff share the ambition to provide the best education for pupils. There is a strong sense of teamwork. Leaders make every effort to support teachers. Teachers say that they have enough time to get their work completed. This ensures that staff can do their jobs well. The school is supported greatly by expertise and support from the trust. Regular opportunities to work with other schools accelerates the rate of improvement across the school. Pupils are at the very heart of all the school does. Staff treat pupils equally. Pupils have every opportunity to succeed.

Leaders have made sure that learning is well planned and sequenced in all subjects. Curriculum plans clearly show that teaching builds pupils' skills and knowledge over time. Leaders have identified the important subject vocabulary that pupils need. Teachers are

starting to plan lessons in a way that helps pupils to remember what they have been taught. Although teaching covers the whole curriculum, some pupils find it hard to remember some significant parts of their learning. This stops them making links and connections between key ideas and concepts.

Phonics teaching is effective. However, leaders have a clear commitment to making pupils' early reading skills even better. During the inspection, a group of children in Nursery shared books with an adult with great enjoyment and enthusiasm. Most children in Reception already know their letter sounds and use them to read harder words. Teachers ensure that pupils learn, remember and blend sounds together. Pupils who fall behind get extra support. All reading books match pupils' early reading skills. This means that pupils can read them with confidence on their own. Consequently, pupils are becoming fluent readers. There is no doubt that reading is a high priority for the school. Reading corners in classrooms are attractive and inviting. Quality books are chosen with care by teachers to reflect pupils' interests. Pupils love choosing a book. All pupils enjoy a story being read to them before they go home. Pupils told me several times that they loved reading.

The school supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. All pupils with SEND have access to the good-quality curriculum. Work is adapted so that it meets pupils' individual needs. Staff make sure that activities and resources match pupils' abilities. This helps pupils with SEND to achieve more over time.

Behaviour in every area of the school is good. Children in the early years are independent and creative. Children in Nursery are settled and developing good listening and speaking skills. Children explored with water, containers and guttering to find out about 'empty' and 'full'. Pupils' behaviour in all classes, in the hall and at breaktimes is calm and sensible. They are friendly, polite and well mannered. Doors were often held open for me. In lessons, pupils are bright, alert and enthusiastic. They are determined to succeed.

Pupils speak maturely about the school values they learn each month. They explained about 'tolerance' of difference, and how learning about being resilient, responsible and respectful helps them do well in school. Pupils are very proud of the 'Promise Books' they have for each class. The books document pledges from teachers about the things pupils will do in the future. Some favourite pledges were taking part in a 'Roman day', building dens in forestry learning, singing in 'Youth Voice' and playing the recorder.

Leaders are determined to improve pupils' attendance. A great deal of work has been done to encourage regular attendance. This includes a range of rewards and incentives for good attendance. The trust's educational welfare officer has recently begun work in school. Early signs are that attendance is improving. Yet there is some way to go before pupils' rates of attendance match those found nationally. Pupils know that missing school can harm their learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained and know how to keep children safe. The regular updates for staff give them information about risks to watch out for. All staff are watchful in their oversight of pupils' welfare and safety. The designated safeguarding governor carries out her role thoroughly. Staff work hard to support a growing number of pupils with social and emotional needs. Pupils have detailed knowledge about the dangers they may meet out of school and how to stay safe online. The school's strong culture of safeguarding extends to strengthening and supporting pupils' all-round physical and emotional well-being.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have made sure that the curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced. Plans show that key ideas and concepts are carefully organised so that pupils' learning builds progressively. Some pupils struggle to remember the content they have been taught over time in some subjects. This was the case in geography. When this occurs, pupils cannot explain how previous learning helps them with the new learning they are being taught. Leaders must make sure that all teaching is designed and delivered to help pupils remember important knowledge and skills so that pupils can make sense of the new learning they are acquiring.
- Leaders must make sure that adults maintain their raised expectations of pupils' early reading skills. Leaders must also ensure that new approaches and strategies become embedded so that phonics teaching is always systematic and consistent.
- Leaders have introduced new strategies and personnel to improve pupils' rates of attendance. However, attendance rates remain too low. Every effort must continue to be made so that pupils' rates of attendance improve, and the proportion of persistent absentees reduces.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Ackton Pastures Primary School to be good on 29–30 June 2016.

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.

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

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| Unique reference number | 144331 |
| Local authority | Wakefield |
| Inspection number | 10133506 |
| 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 | 327 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of governing body | Mrs Bev Riley |
| Headteacher | Mrs Joanne Kershaw |
| Website | www.acktonpastures.com |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- This school is larger than an average-sized primary school. It joined the Inspire Partnership Multi Academy Trust in 2017.
- The school runs a breakfast club for pupils.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is in line with the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly average.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders and other members of staff, including the trust's educational welfare officer and the school's learning mentor.

- I met with a group of governors, including the chair of the local governing body. I also met with the chief executive officer and the school development partner of the Inspire Partnership multi-academy trust. I also met the chair of trustees.
- I took account of the 151 responses to Ofsted's parent questionnaire Parent View and considered the nine 'free-text' comments made by parents. I also considered 15 responses from staff to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 70 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire. I also met with a parent from school.
- I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at playtimes. I gathered pupils' views about the school through formal and informal discussions.
- I considered a wide range of documentation, including subject plans and safeguarding documents. I also looked at information relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- I undertook deep dives into reading, mathematics and geography. This involved a meeting with subject leaders, visits to a sample of lessons in these subjects and listening to pupils read. The deep dives also included scrutiny of pupils' books and other kinds of work produced by pupils who were part of the classes I visited. In addition, I had discussions with teachers and a group of pupils from the lessons observed.

Inspection team

Phil Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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