

Inspection of Ash Grove Primary Academy

Ash Grove, South Elmsall, Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF9 2TF

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. They are polite and well mannered. Pupils understand the school values of respect, responsibility, appreciation and aspiration. They welcome the rewards they receive for showing the values in and around school.

Pupils behave well because leaders have set clear expectations. They follow the rules of ready, respectful and safe. Pupils understand the difference between bullying and falling out. They learn how to recognise bullying and tell adults should it occur. Pupils know that trusted adults are there to help with any concerns that they have. As a result, pupils feel safe. Pupils are aware of the possible dangers in the community and know how to deal with issues should they arise.

Pupils value the opportunity to take on leadership responsibilities, such as anti-bullying ambassadors, well-being ambassadors, playleaders and librarians. They are proud to be selected by their peers. Pupils learn about fundamental British values through assemblies. They recognise difference. These differences are celebrated at key points in the year, for example on International Women's Day.

Parents and staff care about the school and the local community. They want the best possible outcomes for pupils. Pupils say the best aspect of school life is their teachers because, 'they look after us and they are kind to us.'

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

The curriculum is well organised. In most subjects, the curriculum sets out what pupils will learn. In subjects where teachers have received more effective training, for example in mathematics, curriculum delivery is stronger. In most subjects, the curriculum is well planned and sequenced. In a small number of subjects, for example history and science, the knowledge that pupils should learn is not set out precisely.

Leaders have ensured that there are effective systems in place to identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. Teachers successfully make adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum, so that pupils with SEND learn well alongside their peers

Leaders have prioritised reading across the school. From the early years, children learn phonics. Staff are well trained to support pupils to use the best strategies to help pupils read unfamiliar words. Pupils read books that are well matched to the sounds that they know. Leaders have chosen books for the school library that promote an awareness of different cultures and backgrounds. Parents and carers are offered support to help with reading at home. Pupils who fall behind with their reading receive targeted support to help them to catch up.

The early years curriculum places a strong focus on early language and

communication. The curriculum develops children's knowledge from Nursery to Reception, so that they are ready for key stage 1. The early years environment is inviting and well resourced. There are lots of books to promote a love of reading. Children have opportunities to work independently and with their peers. They are happy to share resources and play well together. Staff in the early years engage well with children. They model and develop children's language and communication. Parents are invited to stay-and-play sessions to develop cooperative relationships between school and home from the start. Staff provide information about learning and activities for parents to use at home.

Pupils behave well in class and around school. The new behaviour policy is understood by staff and pupils. Pupils' behaviour is improving. If pupils become distracted in class, staff help pupils to refocus quickly. As a result, the behaviour of pupils does not disrupt learning.

Leaders have developed a clear programme for personal, social, health and economic education from the early years to Year 6. Pupils learn to keep themselves safe in school and in the local community. There is a focus on equality which encourages both boys and girls to be involved in sports. Pupils develop an understanding of mental health and well-being through activities, such as the daily mile and mindfulness sessions.

Leaders, including trust leaders and governors, are very aware of the ongoing issues with attendance. Although pupils' attendance is improving overall, some pupils do not attend school as often as they should. Recently, leaders have put systems in place to further improve pupils' attendance and to reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent.

Although the majority of parents are happy with the work of the school, a small number are not satisfied with the way that their concerns and worries are handled. These parents would like communication between school and home to improve. Leaders recognise there is work to do to improve the school's standing in the local community.

Members of the governing body are well supported by the trust. Governors visit the school regularly to check on aspects of the school's work. They hold leaders to account well for the quality of their work. The majority of staff feel they are supported by leaders and that their workload is taken into account well. Leaders have not won the hearts and minds of the whole staff team.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding is the school's highest priority. Staff are knowledgeable and have accessed safeguarding training recently. The school's systems for reporting concerns are effective. Safeguarding records are detailed.

The school's single central record of staff recruitment checks is accurate. Governors, who visit the school regularly, have a detailed overview of safeguarding systems. Staff and governors are trained in safer recruitment practices. The school makes prompt and effective referrals to local agencies. Pupils are well supported in school by well-trained pastoral staff. Pupils are taught about online safety. They understand how to keep themselves safe when working online and using different apps.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some parents and staff are not happy about leaders' communication with them, including the way that their concerns are dealt with. This has resulted in low staff morale and parental dissatisfaction. Leaders, including those responsible for governance, should prioritise improving communication and engagement with staff and parents.
- In some subjects, for example history and science, teachers do not have clear enough guidance about the specific knowledge that pupils need to be taught. This means that pupils do not remember or build on key concepts from the planned curriculum. Leaders should ensure that the curriculums identify the precise content that pupils need to know and remember.
- Some pupils do not attend school often enough. These pupils miss out on important learning and do not make the progress of which they are capable. Leaders should continue to develop the recently implemented systems to ensure that parents understand the importance of regular attendance and its impact on their children's outcomes.

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	146666
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10267776
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	299
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John North
Headteacher	Victoria Williams
Website	www.ashgroveprimaryacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The substantive headteacher, named in the report, was not present when inspectors visited the school. The deputy chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust was the acting headteacher from February 2023 and was in post at the time of the inspection.
- The school converted to become an academy in December 2018. The school is part of the Inspire Partnership Multi Academy Trust.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- A number of complaints have been made to Ofsted. Inspectors considered these complaints as part of the inspection.

- This is the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the deputy CEO, assistant headteachers, early years lead and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the local governing body, trustees, the CEO and a representative from the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, conducted joint lesson visits with leaders, had discussions with teachers, spoke to pupils about their work and looked at pupils' books and samples of their work.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, around the school and at playtime and lunchtime. They spoke with pupils about their views of the school and their learning, behaviour and safety.
- During the inspection, safeguarding information was scrutinised including the school's policies and records. Inspectors spoke to pupils and observed relationships between pupils and pupils, and pupils and adults. The lead inspector also met with the designated safeguarding leads.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires for staff and pupils, and Ofsted's online survey for parents, Parent View. This included free-text comments. They also talked to parents in the school playground.

Inspection team

Nicola Beaumont, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Judy Shaw	Ofsted Inspector
Louise Greatrex	Ofsted Inspector

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