

Park Junior Academy

Medley Street, Castleford, West Yorkshire, WF10 4BB

Inspection dates 15–16 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- From their starting points, some pupils do not make the best progress of which they are capable, especially in writing and mathematics.
- The teaching of writing and mathematics is not yet good enough to secure the best possible progress for all groups of pupils.
- Teachers do not always check progress during lessons to make certain all pupils achieve as well as they should.
- Pupils sometimes spend too much time practising skills they have already acquired before tackling more challenging work which deepens their understanding.
- Sometimes learning resources restrict opportunities for pupils to deepen their learning and to be as productive as they could.
- Some middle leaders and subject leaders have not fully implemented all their plans in their areas of responsibility to ensure all pupils achieve the best they can.

The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher and the newly appointed headteacher provide a clear and sharply focused direction for the school's future improvement.
- They work well with senior leaders and the governing body to improve teaching and learning. Success has already been achieved, for example, in the good quality of presentation pupils now achieve in their work.
- Pupils read widely and with interest.
- Marking and feedback are used well to enable pupils to improve their own work and develop their self-awareness.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they feel safe. Attendance is above average.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through a rich and engaging curriculum, including residential and many other visits.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed lessons throughout the academy and conducted several shorter observations of teaching and learning, including joint observations with the headteacher and executive headteacher. The inspectors also looked at a wide range of pupils' work and listened to them read.
- Discussions were held with several groups of pupils, the joint Chairs of the Governing Body and other members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and members of staff, including senior leaders and other leaders with particular responsibilities.
- The inspectors took account of the 59 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View), the results from the academy's own consultations with parents, and spoke to many parents during the inspection. The responses from staff to the inspection questionnaires were also considered.
- The inspectors observed the academy's work and looked at a range of documents, including: information on pupils' current progress, the academy's plans for improvement, the management of teachers' performance, the use of pupil premium funding, and documentation and records relating to pupils' behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Andrew Clark, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Firth

Additional Inspector

Prydwen Elfed-Owens

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Park Junior Academy converted to academy status in March 2013. It is part of the Castleford Multi-Academy Trust. The academy was previously Castleford Park Junior School and was last inspected in May 2011, when it was judged satisfactory.
- The academy is larger than the average-sized primary school and numbers on roll are increasing.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, that is those pupils who receive support through the pupil premium funding, is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils has increased since the academy opened.
- The large majority of pupils are White British.
- The academy did not meet the government's current floor standards in 2013 which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- An executive headteacher was appointed in March 2014 following two months working with the Academy as school-to-school support from January 2014. The headteacher resigned in April 2014. A substantive headteacher took up post in September 2014. Currently, they are both involved in leading and managing the academy.
- Over two-thirds of the teaching staff has been appointed since the school converted to an academy, including several who are new to the profession.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching throughout the academy in order to raise pupils' achievement particularly in writing and mathematics by:
 - regularly checking on how well pupils are doing while they are working to ensure they are offered timely advice and guidance, which enhance their understanding and moves their learning on
 - building effectively and consistently on pupils' earlier learning in all lessons
 - Ensuring that limitations in resources do not unnecessarily limit pupils' productivity and opportunity to deepen their learning.
- Strengthen the leadership and management more by:
 - ensuring middle and subject leaders fully implement action plans for future improvement in their areas of responsibility in a timely fashion and strategically monitor their effectiveness.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The executive headteacher and headteacher have established a strong ethos for improvement and a positive culture for learning. As a result, staff are passionate and ambitious for further improvement. However, leadership and management requires improvement because teaching is not yet good and pupils are not yet consistently making the best progress they could.
- Middle leaders, including subject leaders, are not yet fully accountable for raising achievement in their areas of responsibility. Several are new to their posts. They have built on their earlier work with the new leadership team to develop well-considered action plans for future improvement. However, they have not yet had time or opportunity to implement the actions and ensure they strategically assess their impact.
- The executive headteacher and new headteacher are working well with senior leaders to bring about strong and sustained improvements to pupils' achievement. Academy improvement plans clearly focus on rapidly building the academy's strengths as staff develop into their roles following the departure of the previous headteacher and a period of significant staff turbulence.
- Senior leaders act as good role models for other staff through their own teaching and support. Leaders are especially helpful to those new to the profession.
- The headteacher and executive headteacher have led significant improvements to the working environment for staff and pupils. Imaginative, high-quality displays of pupils' work in many subjects contribute to their ambition and pride in their achievement.
- The support of the academy chain is good and is rapidly securing positive achievement. In particular, it has worked closely with the governing body to develop and secure the leadership team, including the role of a business manager, and provide good quality professional training to raise staff expectations and effectiveness.
- The academy is piloting new approaches to its assessment systems and procedures following the removal of national curriculum levels. These are being integrated alongside established systems, but as yet need to be fully implemented in order to measure their impact.
- The academy has appropriate procedures to ensure staff are held accountable for the progress pupils make. Teachers have to meet stringent criteria in order to achieve the next salary level.
- The use of pupil premium funding is increasingly effective in ensuring disadvantaged pupils are narrowing the gap with other pupils throughout the academy. The results of national tests and the academy's own data are carefully analysed to ensure that support is improving learning.
- Leaders ensure that all pupils have the same opportunities to succeed and to participate fully in the life of the academy. There is no evidence of discrimination in the academy. However, the academy is not yet fully effective in ensuring that pupils consistently achieve the best they can.
- Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements and are based on detailed and accurate record keeping and well-trained and vigilant staff.
- Pupils enjoy learning in a range of subjects through the links made between them across the curriculum. For instance there are many examples of good quality work in information and communication technology (ICT), science art, history and geography, throughout academy.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the different subjects taught. Through religious and personal and social education, pupils develop a good appreciation of different faiths and beliefs and gain a good understanding of the life and values of modern British society. For example, studies on the local castle led to investigations into different forms of government. A very wide range of visits, including residential, broaden pupils' horizons and develop their independence.
- Effective use is made of the primary school physical education and sports funding. The academy is building on an already established programme of specialist physical education by further developing the skills of all staff, and widening opportunities for pupils to participate in different sports and team games. This makes a good contribution to pupils' health and well-being.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well led and managed. It is working with the local authority and the academy chain to review its effectiveness and match members' individual skills closely to the roles they undertake. This is a developing strength. The governing body makes good use of data to through its own detailed analysis and planned 'learning walks' to improve its effectiveness in measuring rates of academy improvement and challenging academy leaders. Statutory requirements are met. Governors play a full and robust role in making decisions as to whether teachers and other staff should be rewarded with salary increases and in reviewing targets for the headteacher. They take advantage of a range of training opportunities to improve their effectiveness. Governors ensure the academy is a safe

environment for all users. The governing body regularly monitors the effectiveness of the budget, with strong support from the business manager, including the use of pupil premium and primary school education and sport funding and in employing their own meals service provider.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are happy and behave thoughtfully towards each other and respond well to the respect that all adults show them. The consistent application of the academy's behaviour code contributes well to good behaviour. Pupils are usually strongly engaged in their learning and eager to succeed. In the playground and large busy dining hall pupils behave well and contribute to the calm and orderly atmosphere.
- Classrooms are noticeably orderly and tidy. Pupils wear their smart uniforms with pride. The academy makes good use of outdoor spaces at break, lunchtimes to help pupils develop cooperation and other social skills. Occasionally, pupils' concentration wanes when activities are not sufficiently challenging, but they rarely misbehave.
- Pupils take responsibilities seriously and support others. They are actively involved in fund-raising activities and are proud of their roles as academy councillors or as playground leaders.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe. They have a good knowledge of potential bullying situations, including racial and homophobic concerns and cyber-bullying. They understand that their behaviour affects others and know that they should be kind and considerate. They comment that little bullying takes place and any unkind or inappropriate behaviour is successfully managed by the staff. This is confirmed by the academy's record-keeping procedures and the large majority of parents agree with pupils' positive views.
- Pupils are well prepared for keeping themselves safe in later life. For example, pupils participate in projects on the dangers of drugs and alcohol and visits from health care professionals as part of their sex education programme. There is a regular programme of cycling proficiency and residential visits develop their awareness of danger through outdoor activities and safety discussions.
- The academy works well with pupils who sometimes find it difficult to manage their own emotions and social skills. Parents comment strongly on the effectiveness of the support that the academy gives them and their children and how well prepared their children are for their next stage of education.
- Pupils are keen to come to the academy and are punctual and well prepared for the day's learning. Good use of pupil premium funding ensures that absence rates for disadvantaged pupils are not significantly different to those of others. There are rigorous procedures to monitor pupils' attendance, which is consistently above average.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Pupils sometimes spend too long undertaking work that they can already do before moving on to something more challenging. For example, in mathematics practising two-digit multiplication they had successfully completed previously before starting on something more complicated. Occasionally, the extension work pupils undertake is too simple, for example, asking pupils to carry out the same calculation using larger numbers rather than setting work that deepens pupils' understanding and reasoning.
- Teachers do not check sufficiently well on the progress pupils make during lessons to ensure they consistently make the best progress they can. For example, sometimes pupils struggle with a new concept or idea without enough timely guidance to ensure they move on in their learning and produce all they could. This particularly occurs when the teacher is involved in working with one group of pupils and others are working independently.
- Sometimes, the resources used limit the pupils' opportunities to deepen their learning and build swiftly on their basic skills. For example, when activities only allow for short one word or one number answers, which do not reinforce effectively enough pupils' literacy or numeracy skills. This hinders them from making the very best progress of which they are capable.
- The use of marking and feedback is an increasing strength in the pupils' learning. Work is marked rigorously with precise targets for pupils to achieve. Pupils often contribute to marking their own work, even to the point of setting themselves additional corrections to do to! Errors and misconceptions are speedily addressed. The strength in marking and in pupils' presentation is a direct outcome of the

guidance, expectations and rigour of monitoring by senior leaders.

- Teaching assistants are well informed about pupils' progress and are effectively deployed to support and challenge all groups of learners so that pupils usually do their best.
- The learning needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well understood and all staff who work with them are well informed. Effective reading and writing programmes of work ensure that these pupils learn well in all subjects.
- The most able pupils benefit from links between subjects, opportunities to take leadership roles and often manage aspects of their own learning. They respond well to thoughtful questions which help them to think deeply and recall information. Their overall learning is, however, limited by the overall quality of teaching.
- There is a good atmosphere for learning and pupils respond well in their behaviour and positive attitudes. Classrooms are attractive and orderly. This contributes to pupils' positive behaviour and pride in their work.
- The teaching of reading is largely effective and improving through the development of a good range of exciting resources, including the new library and reading scheme. Pupils' comprehension skills and their enjoyment of fiction and non-fiction are systematically taught and they are given regular opportunities, for example, through guided reading and focused learning time, to embed their skills.
- Pupils' understanding of correct literary and mathematical terms is increasingly well developed. They often make good use of points of reference such as word banks and 'learning walls', including information and communication technology (ICT), to reinforce their learning.
- Pupils also refine and develop their knowledge and understanding in response to skilful and generally effective questioning.
- There is a good trend of improvement in pupils' sporting and physical education as a result of very focused specialist teaching and good development of teachers' skills in this area.
- Pupils' skills are improved through regular, well-planned homework, including the imaginative use of ICT and after-school clubs.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Inspection evidence from pupils' current and previous work shows that too few pupils make consistently better than expected progress, particularly in writing and mathematics to ensure that they achieve the best they can and reach their full potential.
- The work pupils are given does not always ensure they make full use of their skills and deepen their learning, particularly in mathematics and writing. This inhibits progress by all pupils, especially the most able.
- Pupils do not always develop and build on their basic skills in mathematics and writing systematically and rapidly enough and this limits their progress.
- Pupils enter the academy with largely average standards. In 2013, the national curriculum test and assessment results for Year 6 pupils were below average in reading, writing and mathematics and pupils did not meet the current floor targets. Few pupils reached above the level expected for their age. This largely related to specific and significant staff and other issues, which particularly affected the Years 5 and 6 pupils and have since been addressed.
- The academy, through the leadership of the executive headteacher and in partnership with the academy trust, put in place several intensive teaching programmes to boost learning in 2014. The unpublished results for 2014, indicate that test results have risen for pupils of all abilities and are broadly average and above in reading. A further increase in standards is reflected in pupils' current work in Year 5 and Year 6.
- In 2013, the test results for disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics were approximately a term below those of other pupils in the academy and approximately two to three terms below those of all pupils nationally. Their progress and achievement was also affected by the staff issues. The unpublished results for 2014 show that the gap between disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils in the school is reducing. This is also often the case for disadvantaged pupils of other ages and is a direct outcome of well-targeted use of teaching assistants and the pupil premium.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress similar to that of other pupils in the academy and in 2013, many reached standards similar to other pupils. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well by effective special teaching programmes and well-deployed teaching assistants, so that they develop basic skills well, especially in reading. As a result, this prepares them well for learning in all subjects.
- The most able pupils also make progress similar to their peers overall. Outcomes in 2013 were too low but unpublished results suggest that they have improved, especially in reading and writing in 2014 and more

pupils reached Level 5 especially in reading. However, the progress of these pupils is hampered when they are provided with work which does not provide enough challenge and opportunity to deepen understanding. However, they now develop good self-awareness through the effective use of marking and feedback and take steps to rapidly improve their work. They also develop good collaborative and leadership skills through opportunities to work with others and share their ideas.

- Pupils read widely and often and outcomes in reading are generally stronger than those for other subjects. By Year 6, pupils of all abilities read fluently and have a good understanding of character and plot. The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to enrich their understanding of fiction and non-fiction, particularly through the use of the new library.
- A strong focus on pupils' presentation and handwriting has been effective in raising standards in writing significantly over the last few terms. Pupils have risen to teachers' consistently high expectations. As a result, pupils' presentation of their work has improved well. However, writing does not always show sufficient depth or length and creative use of language.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	139359
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	447997

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	368
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co Chairs	R Davies / B Bailey
Headteacher	P Barnett
Executive Headteacher	B Townend
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01977 518959
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