

Inspection of Half Acres Primary Academy

Temple Street, Castleford, West Yorkshire WF10 5RE

Inspection dates:	18 and 19 March 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
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

The headteacher of this school is Rachael Taylor. This school is part of 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?

Pupils describe their school as a 'giving school'. They value the wide range of opportunities that the school provides for them. They are also proud to give back to the school community. For example, pupils were keen to come together for a recent fundraising cause close to their hearts. Pupils of all ages led their own activities. They raised a significant amount of money. These valuable contributions to the wider community help pupils show empathy for others. Pupils have very positive relationships with adults and peers alike. Pupils are kind to others. This creates a culture of warmth and support that everyone enjoys.

Pupils respond well to the high expectations for their behaviour and achievement. Their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils play a significant part in the culture of high expectations for behaviour. For example, they support each other to meet the school's expectations. They relish the purposeful learning environment. Due to expert teaching and support, many pupils achieve well in the school.

Pupil leaders are proud to contribute to their school community. Well-being ambassadors offer support to their peers and to younger children. Children in early years enjoy their interactions with older pupils. These relationships help them feel safe in their school environment.

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

The school has developed a well-sequenced curriculum. Over time, pupils are helped to learn more challenging and complex ideas. In mathematics, pupils revisit key facts on a regular basis. This helps them to remember essential mathematical functions, such as addition and multiplication. Pupils close gaps in their learning through tasks such as 'revisit and review' sessions. The school checks what pupils have remembered and then uses these checks to inform future learning. This helps pupils grasp concepts that they have found difficult. However, on occasion, the tasks that pupils complete in lessons do not help them to embed their skills and knowledge as deeply as they could.

Pupils develop effective phonics knowledge. Those who need extra support are swiftly identified. This ensures that those who need help keep up with their peers. Support includes one-to-one and small-group work. The school ensures that pupils develop effective reading skills over time. Pupils display a love of reading. They enjoy choosing books from the school library to take home. During daily class reading times, pupils hear adults read books that have been carefully selected. These help pupils to explore important themes, such as race and religion. Pupils have a deep care and empathy for their peers. For example, pupils help others who may find their learning more difficult. These relationships help pupils flourish in the school.

The school makes sure that staff know how to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This helps to ensure that pupils with SEND access the ambitious curriculum. During lessons, adults provide clear examples of ways to approach learning. This modelling ensures that all pupils understand how to progress their learning.

Children in early years benefit from well-established routines. They get off to a very positive start to their school journey. Carefully designed activities help children develop key skills. In Nursery, for example, children develop their fine motor skills when making 'pancakes' with modelling clay. In the outdoor provision, children develop their gross motor skills when using the climbing frame. The school sets strong foundations for children's future learning in national curriculum subjects. For example, children in Reception develop their understanding of the world when learning about London. They enjoy comparing and contrasting Castleford and London. They understand their local area and how it may be different to a large city.

The school's 'Pupil Promise' pledges provide pupils with a rich set of experiences through school. Children in early years, for example, describe excitedly how they look after animals when a local farm comes to their school. Pupils in Year 6 prepare for their next stage of education through a range of activities. For example, pupils learn about how to manage their own finances. These experiences help pupils develop increasing independence as they progress through the school.

Members of the school community understand their role in creating the positive culture within school. The behaviour policy is consistently applied. Pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour and support others, too. Pupils' high attendance at school reflects their commitment to learning.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They value the professional development opportunities within the trust. Teachers new to the profession receive highly effective support that continues beyond their initial training. Staff know that they are valued. The trust and governing body offer effective challenge to the school. As a result, there is a continual focus on school improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, the tasks given to pupils in lessons do not help them to practise the important knowledge or skills set out in the ambitious curriculum. This means that some pupils are not helped to embed and apply the key learning. The school should ensure that adults give lesson tasks that help pupils to further secure and deepen their learning.

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	144332
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10346687
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	422
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John North
CEO of the trust	Matthew Knox
Headteacher	Rachael Taylor
Website	www.halfacres.com
Dates of previous inspection	7 and 8 January 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Inspire Partnership Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- Half Acres Primary Academy converted to become an academy in March 2017. When its predecessor school, Castleford Half Acres Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good for overall effectiveness.

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 their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, computing, geography and mathematics. 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 and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector also met with the deputy CEO and subject leaders to discuss the curriculum in art, modern foreign languages and physical education (PE). They also looked at a sample of work from modern foreign languages and PE.
- An inspector met with the leader for key stage 2 reading. They also visited some reading lessons.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO. He also met with members of the trust board and spoke with the chair of the local governing body.
- 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.
- The lead inspector considered the views of parents through the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspectors considered the views of staff and pupils through meetings held with them and through their responses to Ofsted's online survey.

Inspection team

Andrew Gibbins, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Peter Heaton	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Hussey	Ofsted Inspector
Nikkie Godbold	Ofsted Inspector

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