

Inspection of Acomb Primary School

West Bank, York, North Yorkshire YO24 4ES

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 September 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good with evidence of improved performance

The headteacher of this school is Lee Haynes. This school is part of Pathfinder 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, Andrew Daly, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Hattam.

What is it like to attend this school?

Acomb Primary School has a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Pupils love their school. They demonstrate consistently positive attitudes to their education.

Leaders and subject champions have exceptionally high expectations for pupils. They share a vision that puts the pupils at the forefront of everything the school does.

The school's values of resilience, aspiration, integrity and respect are constantly modelled by pupils and adults. Pupils are extremely polite and articulate.

The school environment is purposeful, calm and orderly. Leaders ensure that pupils have opportunities to contribute to the life of the school. For example, key stage 2 playtime buddies model positive behaviour to the younger children, promoting social skills and teamwork.

The school's 'Acorns' initiative enhances pupils' learning. These are a wide, rich set of experiences that give pupils opportunities to develop their character and to make a difference to the school, their community and the wider world. For example, pupils visit local landmarks, perform a Shakespeare play at a York theatre, contribute to the community by tidying the park and support charities.

The school provides an extensive extra-curricular offer. There is strong take-up by pupils to develop their talents and interests in activities like, sport, music, science, art and the environment.

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

The school's exceptional curriculum is designed to meet the specific needs of the Acomb community. The subject champions are passionate and impressively knowledgeable about the subjects they lead. The champions have a clear vision for their subject, including the knowledge and understanding they want pupils to gain in each phase. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully supported to access the curriculum. There is strong adaptive teaching in place to ensure that pupils with SEND can meet the curriculum expectations. For example, a pupil with SEND in a design and technology lesson used an adapted template to measure and saw wood, achieving the same outcome as their peers.

The checks the school make on the knowledge pupils remember take different forms. For example, in geography pupils' recap and revisit learning throughout a topic. The school uses low stakes questions, linked to the key knowledge, to check that pupils have mastered specific knowledge and skills.

Teachers read to pupils every day. The school has developed their own reading spine that includes a wide range of genres and authors to enhance pupils' reading experience. This reading spine was generated exclusively by the school community for the pupils. The school has recently introduced the use of Makaton signs in

Reception to support pupils' phonics retention. Children use the sign for the letter to help to create a physical memory of the sound. Pupils use their phonics knowledge to blend and read unfamiliar words. Teachers make checks on pupils' phonics knowledge during the phonics lesson. If teachers identify pupils who are not keeping up, they receive immediate extra phonics support.

The teaching of mathematics is outstanding. Teachers use appropriate questioning to ensure that cumulative mathematical knowledge builds over time. If pupils need further consolidation, the school ensures that pupils have opportunities to repeatedly practise number facts and times tables before they move on to more complex ideas. Evidence in pupils' mathematics books shows that the school prepares pupils well for their next stage of education.

The early years curriculum is exemplary. The stimulating environment enables children to be independent. Areas of provision, like the role play space, have a specific learning focus that changes regularly. Children display high levels of self-control and self-regulation. Routines, such as pegging their outdoor shoes together, are already established early in the academic year. Children are highly motivated and sustain concentration when participating in exciting and interesting activities.

The school weaves their personal development offer through all aspects of the curriculum. Leaders are relentless in their endeavour to develop pupils into responsible citizens of the world. Pupils have an excellent understanding of equality and diversity. There is a whole-school approach to ensuring that pupils learn about healthy relationships, consent and staying safe.

The school has increased its high-quality pastoral support for pupils. Staff provide nurture and care for pupils with mental health or well-being needs.

The members of the school council make a positive contribution to the school. They actively survey pupils and implement change. For example, pupils told the school council they would like more mirrors, so mirrors now hang in the toilets.

The trust and local governing committee recognise the strength of the school leadership. Leadership at all levels is extraordinary. The school offers all staff professional development opportunities to enhance their subject knowledge. This consistently translates into improvements in the curriculum.

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 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	144265
Local authority	York
Inspection number	10268036
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	317
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Hattam
Headteacher	Lee Haynes
Website	www.acombprimary.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	24 and 25 May 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school joined the Pathfinder Multi-Academy Trust in January 2018.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

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

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, subject champions, staff and pupils.
- Meetings were also held with representatives of the local governing committee, the chief executive officer and the link trustee.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography, science and design and technology. 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.
- 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 views of parents, staff and pupils were considered from meeting with them and from the responses to Ofsted's questionnaire.

Inspection team

Alison Stephenson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Nicola Murray	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Sullivan	His Majesty's Inspector

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