

Jerry Clay Academy

Jerry Clay Lane, Wrenthorpe, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF2 0NP

Inspection dates

15–16 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher has built a culture of ambition and high expectations which is shared by everyone in school. As a result, pupils make rapid progress from their starting points.
- Leaders, including governors, are outward looking and always seeking ways to improve, often through partnerships with others. Leaders seize opportunities for strong external support and promote the sharing of excellent practice. As a result, the quality of provision and pupils' outcomes have risen strongly since the last inspection. Outcomes are at least in line with, and often better than, those of pupils nationally.
- A drive for consistently high-quality systems that are understood by all and strong teamwork have quickly improved the quality of teaching. The robust plans for further improving mathematics are having a positive impact on progress across the school, though further developing reasoning skills is a focus for older pupils.
- The curriculum is vibrant. The indoor and outdoor learning environments are carefully planned to engage and challenge pupils in their learning.
- The behaviour of pupils, in classrooms, around school and outside, is exemplary.
- Approaches for the teaching of phonics and consistency in phonics teaching have resulted in rising results that are now well above those of pupils nationally.
- Disadvantaged pupils make strong progress due to diligent planning of spending additional funding which is carefully matched to the support pupils need.
- Children get a positive start to school in Reception. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of the early years has risen over the last four years.
- The new team working together in Reception plans exciting opportunities for children to develop their skills across all aspects of the curriculum. However, the systems for measuring and checking the progress children make and to identify the next steps they need to take are not well enough defined.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and would strongly recommend it to other parents.
- Pupils say that, 'Jerry Clay is a brilliant place to be'. They clearly enjoy school and attendance is consistently better than that of pupils nationally.
- Pupils have a strong voice in school improvement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve progress in mathematics for pupils in key stage 2 so that they achieve standards that are similarly high to those in reading and writing by:
 - continuing to implement the school's focused plans to ensure consistency in systems used to teach mathematics
 - providing opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in challenges that are purposeful and that encourage them to reason and share their learning to deepen their understanding.
- Improve assessment in the early years by continuing to refine systems for recording children's learning, including observations of learning and work produced to ensure that staff, parents and leaders have a clearer view of the progress made and the next steps to be taken.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The school's aim of 'striving to be the best in everything we do' is demonstrated clearly by leaders, staff and pupils.
- The headteacher's positive and determined approach to school improvement permeates throughout the school. Her focus on developing systems that are consistent and understood by everyone has been successful in embedding practices that support pupils making very strong progress. The care and time she dedicates to pupils, families and staff are mentioned warmly by many.
- The new deputy headteacher works ably alongside the headteacher and middle leaders. She has an accurate and honest view of the school's strengths and the focus areas for improvement.
- The senior and middle leadership team leaps into action where any area of performance is not exceptional. For example, the rigour around new systems and strategies for the teaching of phonics has had an impressive impact on phonics outcomes, as well as improving pupils' reading and writing skills. Where key stage 2 results in reading dipped slightly in 2015, robust improvement strategies were implemented, which were closely and frequently checked. This led to an improvement in 2016 outcomes, with a particular increase in the number of pupils reaching higher standards.
- Very careful attention has been given to improving the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics. Leaders know that quick fixes are just that, and have been clear in their vision to develop and embed skills from the early years right through school. The impact of this is evident in the strong progress pupils are making, particularly in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2. Leaders have identified that the oldest pupils in school need further opportunities to test and apply their skills in practical challenges across the curriculum to help them to deepen their understanding.
- Leaders stringently check improvement. Assessment information, pupils' work and frequent drop-ins to teaching sessions give leaders a clear view of where support for pupils is most needed. The performance of staff is managed very well. Progress against challenging targets linked directly to the improvement plan is carefully checked and this impacts positively on the quality of teaching.
- Leaders are relentless in their pursuit of teaching that is of the highest quality. They welcome new staff and the new strengths and ideas they bring. Leaders are speedy in their support to ensure that all staff are clear about 'The Jerry Clay Way', ensuring that teaching and learning are consistently effective across the school. A good example of this is the highly effective support given to staff who are new to teaching, and also the rigour applied to the induction of new staff in the early years, to quickly re-establish the high standards that have been set.

- The leadership support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is a further example of where leaders have been determined to maintain high-quality provision throughout staffing changes. The leader has a good understanding of pupils' very different needs, and a clear overview of the support in place for each pupil and the impact this is having. Many of these pupils have attainment that is line with that of other pupils in school, but need additional support, for example for medical conditions. Careful consideration is given to how these needs can best be met and the particular support pupils may need in and out of class. The government funding to support these pupils is used successfully: these pupils make strong progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils make progress that is often better than that of other pupils nationally. This is due to leaders' precise plans for the spending of the pupil premium funding being carefully matched to individual pupils' needs.
- Leaders have devised a curriculum that is purposeful and exciting and equips pupils well for the next stage of their education. Pupils speak confidently about their work across all aspects of the curriculum, in the indoor and outdoor learning spaces. Wide-ranging extra-curricular activities are on offer for pupils of all ages. This wider curriculum supports pupils in further extending their academic and social skills.
- The primary school physical education and sport funding has been used effectively. Teaching skills have been developed, pupils have more opportunities to attend a wide range of sports clubs, and playtime activities to promote health, fitness and well-being are innovative and inspiring.
- Parents feel very much part of the life of the school and well informed about their child's progress. Parents spoken to during the inspection and comments on Ofsted's online questionnaire reflect the strong sense of community, effective communication and high-quality teaching and care from staff.

Governance of the school

- Governors are rightly proud of the school's achievements. They are very well informed about progress against the school's priorities through detailed information from the headteacher as well as through their frequent visits to school to see first-hand the work that is going on. These visits focus on all aspects of school life including academic progress, behaviour, assemblies and safeguarding. Reporting back to the governing body is carefully tracked against the school improvement agenda. This information, along with reports from the external consultant, give them an accurate view of the school's performance.
- There is a clear drive by governors to find opportunities to improve their practice. It is clear that they want the very best for pupils at Jerry Clay and understand that they have a fundamental part to play in making this happen.
- Governors understand how funding is used effectively to support all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School leaders and governors have made sure that the policies and practices for safeguarding are understood by all.
- There are clear systems in place for the safe recruitment and induction of new staff.
- Leaders have ensured that there is a good understanding that keeping pupils safe is everyone's responsibility. Where any concern arises, staff are clear about procedures. Issues are carefully recorded and robustly followed up by leaders. The designated leaders for safeguarding work closely with external agencies when appropriate.
- Pupils too are encouraged to take responsibility for their own safety and that of others. Junior leaders have safety as high profile on their agenda. For example, recently, these pupils undertook surveys on the playground about the use of the internet to raise the profile of checking the suitability of websites. This supports school leaders' work in their planning for teaching about internet safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- The staff team is clear in its desire to offer the very best learning experiences for pupils. They work very well together, sharing ideas and best practice. They are also eager to develop their teaching further afield, for example, through their collaborative work with other schools. The resulting high quality of teaching, learning and assessment enables pupils to make rapid progress.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge and a clear understanding of the national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. They make sure that pupils know exactly what is expected of them.
- The approach to the teaching of phonics is rigorous. Teachers make careful and frequent checks on progress so that pupils are constantly challenged appropriately. As a result, pupils apply their phonics knowledge confidently to their reading and writing activities.
- Many pupils across school are reading at higher standards, in terms of their fluency and their understanding of the books they read. A few pupils in key stage 1 said that although they found reading a bit tricky, they really liked the help they got from their reading buddy in key stage 2 each week. They proudly showed inspectors their reading records where their buddies had listened to them read and written encouraging comments.
- Teachers plan work that appropriately challenges pupils of all abilities. Adults adeptly support pupils who need further help and challenge those who are confident, accurate and ready to extend their learning.
- Positive attitudes to learning are modelled constantly and pupils make comments such as, 'I know how that could be further improved,' and, 'What ways do we know that we can test that out?'

- The school's drive to improve mathematics provision is clearly visible across school. Pupils demonstrate confidence in applying their skills across a wide range of activities. They are able to work successfully, independently and alongside others, making excellent progress. For the oldest pupils, teachers have focused on ensuring that skills are lifted to the expectations of the new national standards. Teachers agree that pupils now need more opportunities to select skills to apply to different situations, give reasons for their choices and challenge each other's thinking and reasoning.
- Teaching assistants support pupils well in their learning, through work alongside pupils in class as well as focused group work to support specific aspects of learning. There is a focus on all-round development; for example, adults remind pupils how to position themselves correctly when writing and point out incorrect formation of letters.
- For pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, care and nurture alongside positive, clear explanations of tasks enable them to make strong progress.
- The curriculum is enhanced by teachers working alongside specialists, for example, in music and physical education. Strong progress is taking place and positive learning attitudes are being developed. When pupils showed one of the inspectors around the school, they pointed out the 'wonderful' staff who came in to develop aspects of their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Leaders have instilled a desire in pupils to strive for improvement. High expectations of behaviour and achievement are clear and closely married with praise and celebration of goals reached. Pupils are clear about what they have done well, and are rightly eager to share this.
- The work of the 'junior leaders' is exemplary. These pupils make a strong contribution to the improvement of the school. Pupils have to undertake a rigorous recruitment process to be appointed to these positions. They work with the school leadership team conducting a variety of school improvement activities, which include evaluating aspects of the school's work, leading assemblies, seeking the opinion of other pupils and summarising their findings. The impact of this mini-leadership team is very positive.
- Pupils are incredibly proud of their school and everyone who works within it. When pupils offered to show one of the inspectors round areas of the school at playtime, they were careful to point out the great work people in their school did. For example, they were keen to talk about their caretaker, who not only kept their school spick and span, but had taken time to make them a fantastic new hand-crafted house-points board.

- There is excellent support for pupils in all aspects of their school life and beyond. The pastoral leader is, parents and pupils say, extremely approachable and 'always there to give help if you should need it'. Transition arrangements to secondary school are well thought out and provide strong support for pupils, as well as the 'Luggage for Life' programme for families. Staff in school undertake a variety of additional training to improve their skills, ensuring that they can most effectively support pupils in a wide range of circumstances.
- Playtimes are a positive time of the day. Appointed 'playground pals' support pupils well and encourage the careful and sensible use of a wide variety of equipment. Every opportunity is taken to encourage pupils to learn. For example, a number of stations around the playground provide carefully thought out and grouped equipment to develop skills such as perseverance, team-building and risk-taking.
- The same level of care and support continues through breakfast club and after-school club. Pupils explained that you can relax and that 'it feels just like home', as well as speaking with animation about the special themed food available, such as on Chinese day.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. This is consistent throughout all times of the day: in lesson time; at playtime; when coming and going around school; and in music and outdoor physical education sessions.
- Pupils treat each other with respect and courtesy. They are extremely welcoming, confident to speak about their school and check whether visitors are having a nice day. They know how important it is to be good citizens and engage in and enjoy a number of activities within their local community.
- Pupils show obvious enjoyment in their lessons and a keen desire to be challenged.
- Although pupils say that unkindness or bullying in any form is rare, they are clear about what they should do if it did happen. They say, with confidence, that any staff in school would help them if they had a problem.
- Children do not want to miss a day of school. Attendance is consistently better than that of pupils nationally. Staff actively promote good attendance and are rigorous in their approach to checking and following up any attendance and punctuality issues.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- The ambitious approach by leaders and staff to constantly bring about improvement has resulted in strong outcomes for pupils, which are generally better than those achieved by pupils nationally. Outcomes have continued to improve since the last inspection.
- Strong progress through the early years continues in key stage 1. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard and working at greater depth is above national figures. These pupils make outstanding progress.

- Pupils apply their phonics skills very well. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics check at the end of Year 1 has risen rapidly, with all Year 1 pupils achieving the standard in 2016.
- Results at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 were better than those nationally in reading and writing and in line with the national picture in mathematics. Leaders know that in mathematics this is because of the ground that has had to be covered to ensure that standards at the end of Year 6 are up to the new national expectations. They are rigorous in their actions to ensure that progress for current Year 6 pupils is accelerated to higher standards. Current work in all other year groups shows that progress is already much stronger. Year 5, for example, has a greater proportion of pupils working at the expected and higher standards.
- Focused attention to the needs of disadvantaged pupils means that they make strong progress over their time in school. Support for the most able disadvantaged pupils is just as strong. Parents say that through parent–teacher meetings, they are aware of how pupil premium funding is spent and the impact that it is having for their child.
- Additional support is carefully directed to the individual needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Consequently, these pupils make strong progress.
- The culture of high expectations means that all pupils, including the most able, are constantly challenged in their learning. The most able pupils have opportunities to share and discuss their learning. They are encouraged, by clear success criteria, to broaden their thinking across the curriculum. Current work in their books shows that they are making excellent progress, particularly in writing.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter the Reception class with skills that are broadly typical for their age, with skills in language and communication slightly lower.
- Work that has taken place over the last few years on creating a purposeful, engaging and calm environment for learning has been successful.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development has continued to rise over the last four years and has been well above that of children nationally for the last two years. Last year, the proportion of children working beyond what is typical for their age was particularly high due to highly effective challenge and questioning from adults.
- This year, due to circumstances beyond the school’s control, a new team is working together in the Reception class. The able new class teacher is dedicated to improvement. She, along with the other adults in the setting, is working tirelessly to ensure that teaching and learning are of the highest quality. Current children’s work shows good progress overall.

- Through the transition in staffing, leaders have been strongly focused on ensuring that high-quality provision is maintained. Exciting learning opportunities and effective modelling by adults promote strong progress and learning behaviours. However, the approach to gathering and analysis of children's work is more variable. Children's work, records of learning and observations are kept in several different ways using various systems and it is not always clear what progress a child is making across all aspects of the curriculum. The quality of these assessments can also be varied, though this shows improvement in recent weeks. Although adults in the classroom know the children well, this information is harder for leaders to analyse effectively to identify where children's learning and progress are less rapid.
- The indoor and outdoor learning spaces have been set up with care and close attention to children's needs and interests. As a result, children are engaged, collaborate well with each other and are challenged in their learning. Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged receive support that is clearly matched to their needs.
- Much learning takes place through role play and the opportunities set up to promote this, as well as the adults' modelling in each area, are of high quality. Children made a large windmill outside and were eager to tell adults about this. Although a little shy when answering questions about their model, children's subsequent written accounts were detailed and purposeful.
- Children's behaviour in the early years is excellent. They listen carefully to adults, responding quickly when asked to do a task, and take care of their classroom.
- Children work very positively alongside each other, sustaining concentration and eagerly talking about their learning. For example, a group working cooperatively in the water tray developed their own system for pouring coloured water into jugs and passing these down the line they had made. When some children were worried they had spilt some, others said, 'Don't worry if you get wet, just leave it and it will dry off in the sun'. The children then put some water on the playground and said that they would check how hot the sun was and how quickly the water dried up.
- Parents are successfully involved in their children's learning. They are invited into the classroom each Friday to look at the learning journey wall achievements for that week. They can add 'wow' cards with special moments that have taken place at home. There are sessions and workshops that parents can take part in to help them support their child's learning at home. Parents spoken to feel that the transition to school life was a smooth one. This was due to activities such as visiting school to speak to leaders and staff, taking part in play activities and staying for a school lunch with their child.
- Safeguarding is effective and statutory welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	137148
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10023861

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Nicol
Headteacher	Tracy Swinburne
Telephone number	01924 303665
Website	www.jerryclayacademy.wakefield.sch.uk
Email address	info@jerryclayacademy.wakefield.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 July 2013

Information about this school

- Jerry Clay Academy is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics.
- The school has a smaller than national proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is below average.
- The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is below the national average.
- The school operates a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils learning in a range of lessons, some alongside the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work across the curriculum. Some of this took place alongside middle leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including: assessment information; school development planning; school self-evaluation; minutes of meetings of the governing body; information about the performance of teachers; documents relating to behaviour and safety; and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Meetings took place with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, staff, representatives from the governing body and groups of pupils. The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with the school's external improvement consultant.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the school. Inspectors also considered the 149 parent responses and the 25 staff responses to Ofsted questionnaires.

Inspection team

Kate Rowley, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tracy Millard	Ofsted Inspector
Ella Besharati	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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