

Bessacarr Primary School

Ellers Avenue, Bessacarr, Doncaster DN4 7DT

Inspection dates

29–30 June 2016

Overall effectiveness

Good

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive headteacher has been instrumental in tackling shortcomings and galvanising staff to secure improvements for the benefit of all pupils.
- With the support of governors, senior leaders and staff have systematically addressed the areas requiring improvement.
- Teaching has improved. Consequently, pupils' outcomes have improved and are now good. There have been year-on-year improvements to outcomes at the end of the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Teachers ensure that lessons begin promptly and the expectations of pupils are clear. Pupils' handwriting and presentation are much improved and pupils are proud of their work.
- Pupils who have specific social and emotional needs are well supported and nurtured to do their best.
- The high quality of the displays, and the learning environment around the school, results in a purposeful environment where learning flourishes.
- Pupils' personal development and behaviour are good. Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for. Pupils behave well around the school and in most lessons.
- Good leadership of the early years has driven improvement in this area. Provision has improved so that it is a strength of the school. Consequently, children get off to a good start and are well prepared for their move into Year 1.
- Governors know the school well. Their high aspirations mean they hold leaders to account for the quality of provision and pupils' outcomes.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There remains some variation in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Sometimes tasks are undemanding and do not challenge the most able or are too difficult for the least able.
- Although progress is good overall, boys' attainment in reading lags behind girls'. Boys do not use their reading journals as well as girls and some pupils, mainly boys, say they do not read for pleasure.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve boys' attainment and attitudes to reading so that they are more consistently in line with those of girls by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to read for pleasure
 - ensuring that, in line with the school's policy, reading journals are used more consistently by boys.
- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that teachers consistently:
 - provide work that effectively meets the needs of pupils of all abilities so that it challenges the most able and is not too difficult for the least able
 - make sure that the deployment and skills of teaching assistants have a positive impact on pupils' learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Leaders and managers have successfully addressed all of the issues identified at the time of the previous inspection so the school is much improved. Consequently, the effectiveness of the early years is now securely good. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved and outcomes for pupils are securely good.
- Pupils say they are happy and enjoy their time at the school. They value the academic and sporting opportunities offered. The good curriculum is broad and balanced and focuses appropriately on reading, writing and mathematics, but ensures that pupils benefit from much enrichment. For example, there are regular visits out of school and a residential visit for older pupils. Pupils talk very positively about their opportunity to learn Spanish and they have benefited from the school employing a Spanish-speaking language assistant through a British Council scheme.
- The curriculum provides effectively for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are taught about a range of world religions. Important values are embedded into the work of the school. Pupils are actively encouraged to be respectful and tolerant of others. They have a secure understanding of the importance of rules in school and across the country. Recent discussions about the European referendum mean that older pupils have a good understanding of British democracy.
- Performance management is used robustly to set annual targets for all teachers and is helping to hold teachers to account for the progress of pupils in their classes.
- Self-evaluation is largely accurate. The evaluation of teaching is accurate and identifies areas where individuals need further training or support. The guidance and support for teachers, along with training, have secured improvements to the quality of teaching.
- Pupil premium funding is used appropriately to provide additional resources and extra tuition for individuals. Although sound, the published statement does not always fully justify all planned expenditure linked to the evaluation of the previous year. The pupil-premium coordinator, the deputy headteacher who works across both schools in the federation, is very keen to do the best for all pupils and has a sound overview of the work that is taking place. Impact is evident; for example, gaps in attainment have closed and some well-targeted support has contributed to improved attendance for specific pupils.
- Sports funding is used well to allow all pupils to participate in a wide range of competitive sporting activities. Pupils say they enjoy physical education and understand the importance of regular exercise. They particularly enjoyed sports week, which gave pupils the opportunity to take part in a wide range of activities, including dance, athletics and competitive games.
- The school has engaged well with other, more effective, schools and the federation with Armthorpe Southfield Primary School has proved to be highly effective. This has contributed to the school's improvements. However, some parents and carers report that they do not fully understand the new leadership arrangements.
- Although middle leadership is largely effective, some leaders are new to their posts and, while some are very effective, a few are still getting to grips with their roles. Plans for future improvement are clear and identify where improvement is needed. Some leaders do not always evaluate their work in terms of the impact it has on outcomes for pupils. Senior leaders are aware of this and have plans in place to address it.
- Although parents' views are largely positive about the school, their views indicate that they have concerns about pupils' behaviour, bullying, leadership and communication from the school. To some extent, these views reflect the recent changes and the small variability in teaching. Parents may be reassured by the largely good behaviour seen by inspectors.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance has improved. Governors have a very detailed knowledge of the workings of the school. They have high aspirations and want to build on the school's recent improvements.
 - Regular visits to the school and learning walks allow governors to sample first-hand the work of the school and initiatives taking place that use the pupil-premium funding. Governors receive regular reports from the headteacher, including information about pupils' progress and end of key stage outcomes.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The statutory requirements for child protection are met. Staff are appropriately trained and knowledgeable about the need to protect pupils from harm. A recently

formed inclusion team ensures that, where pupils are at risk, policies are adhered to, and that staff engage well with parents and other agencies to ensure that pupils are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching has improved securely since the previous inspection and now ensures that pupils make good progress from their different starting points.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are strong and contribute to the good behaviour and attitudes of pupils.
- Teachers typically use their strong subject knowledge well to provide clear and precise explanations. They often use questioning well to deepen pupils' understanding or to check on their learning.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved. In the lessons visited by inspectors, pupils' mathematical skills were developed well because teachers allowed pupils to practise computations and explain their answers. Teachers' questioning is effective and explanations use precise mathematical language. Concrete materials and pictures are used well to help pupils learn new mathematical concepts. Pupils are able to reason, explain their answers and show good mathematical knowledge.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) is effective. This is helping pupils with their reading and spelling skills. Consequently, across the school, pupils' ability to spell is generally good.
- Reading is taught effectively and builds on pupils' knowledge of letters and sounds. In key stage 2, pupils use a reading journal to record their views about the books they read in school. They answer comprehension questions and reflect on the features of different types of text. However, on some occasions, the level of detail recorded by the boys is not as accurate or well thought out as that recorded by the girls. Although pupils have regular opportunities to read, some comment that they are not all able to read a wide range of books for pleasure.
- Exercise books show that pupils have regular opportunities to write at length and across different genres and subjects. For example, their wide and positive experiences of practical science work are recorded well. In Year 6 books, these are presented as well-planned factual reports.
- A particularly effective improvement since the previous inspection is the largely consistent application of the school's marking and feedback policy in mathematics and writing. The marking of pupils' work is now regular and provides pupils with effective feedback.
- Teachers routinely plan work that includes appropriate challenge for the most able pupils. However, sometimes pupils are required to work through a series of undemanding tasks before they reach the work designed to challenge them. Planned learning activities largely meet the needs of most pupils. They have been successful at ensuring that largely good teaching leads to good progress, but there is some variability. Sometimes tasks are not always challenging for the most able pupils. Conversely, in a small number of cases, the tasks for the least able are a little too difficult.
- In some lessons, teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. For example, they intervene and help pupils move on to the next piece for work. However, this is not always the case and sometimes their role is unclear. Variability in the skills of teaching assistants means that sometimes their work does not lead to improved learning for all pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are generally keen to learn and want to do their best. They enjoy both the social and the academic aspects of school life. They play well outside and older pupils enjoy taking responsibility, including helping younger pupils.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors were polite, well mannered and courteous. They expressed very positive views about the school and how well the adults look after them. For example, one pupil stated, 'There is always someone to talk to if I have a problem'.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is strong. Assemblies are used to encourage pupils to think about moral issues. British values are promoted effectively, for example by teaching pupils about significant festivals from a range of world religions. Pupils who speak other languages are proud of their skills and are made to feel valued for them.

- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They understand about different forms of bullying, including racism. They say that, if there are any concerns about bullying, staff listen and deal with their concerns. Pupils know about the importance of road safety, 'stranger danger' and the dangers associated with internet use.
- The buildings and grounds are well kept. Sound risk assessments are in place for the whole site to cover the activities that take place. Risk assessments for off-site visits are undertaken before any such visits.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour in classrooms and their attitudes to learning are good and sometimes very good. These contribute to pupils' good learning and progress. Pupils say that classroom learning is rarely disturbed by lapses in behaviour. Where inspectors saw behaviour that was less conducive to good learning, this related directly to the effectiveness of teaching and the match of the tasks to pupils' needs.
- Behaviour at lunchtime and breaktime is good. Pupils confirmed that the good and sometimes better behaviour seen during the inspection was typical of their experience at the school. Pupils of all ages get along well and many examples were observed of older pupils helping younger pupils.
- The improvement in behaviour is reflected in the fact that the number of exclusions has reduced over the last two years.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and pupils typically arrive on time and are eager to start the day. Persistent absenteeism is rare, but there are secure strategies in place to monitor attendance and work with families when needed.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Work in pupils' books and learning observed in lessons show that pupils achieve well in a wide range of subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics. From different starting points, pupils make good progress during their time at the school. They acquire a broad range of skills so they are able to talk with confidence about their learning in subjects such as science, history and art. Their achievements are celebrated in displays around the school.
- Children usually enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge that, overall, are typical for their age. They get off to a good start and make good gains during their time in Nursery and Reception. There are particular strengths in the development of children's speaking, listening and social skills. This good start prepares them well for the move into Year 1.
- In Year 1, improvements to the teaching of letters and sounds have led to improved proportions of pupils reaching the expected standard in the national phonics screening check. By the end of Year 2, the proportion of pupils with a secure grasp of phonics is higher than the national figure.
- Assessments at the end of key stage 1 in 2015 showed strong improvements on the previous year's performance so that attainment was well above average. A majority of pupils achieved the expected levels for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Recent national assessments indicate that in 2016 attainment will be similarly strong, reflecting good progress from pupils' starting points.
- At the end of key stage 2 in 2015, pupils' attainment in reading, writing, mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling was above average. The school's assessment records show an improved profile of achievement over time. Inspection evidence from a scrutiny of pupils' books indicates that these pupils have made good progress.
- The school has improved its effectiveness in ensuring that most groups of pupils, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the disadvantaged and pupils who speak English as an additional language, achieve well over time. The most able pupils make good progress overall. However, senior leaders are well aware of the need to boost the attainment of some of the most able pupils by ensuring that tasks fully challenge this group of pupils.
- In 2015, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 improved so that it was similar to that of their peers in school and other pupils nationally. However, there remained a gap in reading, with disadvantaged pupils not doing quite as well as their peers. Current school records for Year 6 pupils indicate that any differences in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their peers are now minimal. Across the school, disadvantaged pupils are making good progress overall, but in a few year groups there are differences between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their peers. Leaders are aware of these and have suitable strategies in place to narrow these gaps.

- Although they make good progress from their different starting points, the attainment of boys in reading is inconsistent and, overall, across the school, boys do not do as well as girls.

Early years provision

is good

- Effective leadership has secured improved provision and outcomes for children across the early years. Staff training and a review of the curriculum have improved the confidence of staff. Year-on-year improvement means that children make good progress from their starting points and are well prepared for Year 1. The early years leader has an accurate picture of the strengths and is clear about where further improvement is needed.
- The recently revised curriculum provides a broad range of interesting and demanding activities. For example, in the Nursery, children enjoyed counting the correct number of pieces of fruit to make fruit kebabs. The teacher's clear expectations ensured that children counted accurately.
- The environment provides a range of interesting learning experiences for pupils. The indoor areas provide some good-quality displays, which are often used to reinforce key words and mathematical ideas. However, the outdoor area is a little less well developed in terms of promoting children's reading development.
- Children enjoy their learning and participate fully in the wide range of well-thought-out activities. Children with additional needs are given appropriate support, including children who speak English as an additional language. Teachers effectively support children's early writing by providing a range of writing activities for children to choose from, and staff effectively model writing and sentences when working with children.
- Children behave well as a result of staff expectations. They cooperate well, share resources, make friends and respect each other.
- Parents are treated as partners in their children's learning. They are encouraged to support their children's learning and they value the regular opportunities for 'stay and play'.

School details

Unique reference number	106739
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10011945

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	417
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Coates
Executive headteacher	Sarah Cairns
Telephone number	01302 535110
Website	www.bessacarr.doncaster.sch.uk/
Email address	head@bessacarr.doncaster.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 March 2014

Information about this school

- Bessacarr is larger than the average-sized primary school. The number on roll has increased over the last three years. Due to the increase in the number of pupils, extra staff have joined the school since the previous inspection. A small number of teachers have left the school since the previous inspection and seven new teachers, including some newly qualified teachers, have joined the school.
- Since the inspection in March 2014, the school has federated with Armthorpe Southfield Primary School. Since September 2015, both schools have shared one governing body and an executive headteacher. A head of school has day-to-day responsibility for the management of each school. The deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator work in both schools.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above the national average, but few pupils are at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language.
- A smaller than average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average.
- In 2015, the school met government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes, including the work of all teachers. Three lessons were observed jointly by the lead inspector, the executive headteacher and the head of school. Almost all of the Year 6 pupils were on a residential visit during the inspection. The Year 6 exercise books were scrutinised in some detail along with the teachers' planning and assessment information.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher and head of school, senior leaders, governors and a representative of the local authority. The inspectors met formally with three groups of pupils as well as observing them informally throughout the two days. The inspectors listened to pupils read and scrutinised work in their books. Inspectors analysed the records of pupils' progress maintained by the school.
- The inspectors examined a wide range of documentation, including the school's plans for future improvement, records of the governing body meetings and a selection of policies, including those relating to safeguarding and behaviour.
- The inspectors took account of 92 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as several detailed comments submitted by parents. The inspectors also chatted with some parents as they dropped off or collected their children. Two parents met with inspectors. Inspectors also took account of 18 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Amraz Ali, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Birch	Ofsted Inspector
Lynda Florence	Ofsted Inspector

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