

# Pheasant Bank Academy

West End Lane, Rossington, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN11 0PQ

Inspection dates	28 February-1 March 2017
Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

# Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

#### This is an inadequate school

- Pupils, including the most able, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, do not make enough progress from their starting points across a range of subjects, including reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- Until very recently, leaders, including the trust, failed to take appropriate action to stem the decline in the standards attained by pupils. As a result of this legacy of poor achievement, too few pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate. Recent improvements introduced by new leaders are not yet consistent across the school.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of the quality or quantity of work that pupils can produce. Too often, activities do not challenge pupils at the right level.

#### The school has the following strengths

- The new executive principal and headteacher have made significant, positive changes to the school in the short time since their arrival. They have high expectations and a clear vision for the future of the school.
- Pupils speak highly of the care, advice and encouragement they receive from their teachers. They recognise and appreciate the recent improvements to their school.

- Gaps in pupils' basic skills in mathematics, as a result of weak teaching over time, are hampering their progress in this subject.
- The quality of support provided to pupils in the classroom by teaching assistants is variable.
- A number of middle and senior leaders are new to their roles and have not had time yet to develop the skills they need to fulfil their roles to best effect.
- Plans to develop the school's performance are focused on the correct priorities but do not have precise enough targets for the progress made by pupils so that governors can keep a close check on the impact of leaders' work.
- New assessment systems do not allow leaders to keep track fully of the progress made by pupils and groups of pupils in every subject.
- A small minority of pupils do not behave consistently well in lessons and around school.
- Recent changes to the leadership of the trust have resulted in decisive action to improve the school. Leaders and teachers are benefiting from a wide range of high-quality support from the trust.
- The trust, the executive principal and the headteacher are clear about what needs to be done to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can.



# Full report

In accordance with sections 44(2) and 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

#### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are making consistently good progress in all subjects by:
  - ensuring that teachers and teaching assistants have appropriately high expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - setting work, including homework, at the right level of challenge, particularly for middle-attaining and the most able pupils, and giving pupils the chance to think for themselves
  - addressing the deficit in pupils' basic skills in mathematics so that pupils quickly recall number facts and apply them in meaningful contexts through problemsolving
  - expecting pupils to write at length in a range of subjects and ensuring that they understand the audience and purpose of their writing
  - giving pupils more opportunities to develop their higher-level reading comprehension skills and demanding better-quality responses from pupils to questions about their reading
  - increasing the opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and knowledge in science
  - developing the skills of teaching assistants so that they can better support pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, to achieve well.
- Improve the quality of leadership by:
  - continuing to develop the skills of new subject leaders, including those responsible for the progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that they can fulfil their roles effectively and improve outcomes for pupils
  - making sure that all plans, including those for pupil premium spending, have precise and measurable targets for the progress made by pupils, so that leaders can keep a careful check on the difference their work is making
  - refining assessment systems to enable leaders to identify quickly the proportions of pupils and groups of pupils making consistently strong progress, in all subjects, from their starting points
  - ensuring that staff consistently apply the school's behaviour policy so that all pupils demonstrate good behaviour and attitudes to learning.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

**Requires improvement** 

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

underperformance in the school. As a consequence, the quality of teaching declined over time and the outcomes achieved by pupils have remained low. The school did not meet the government's minimum standards for pupils' achievement at the end of Year 6 in the 2015/16 academic year.

Until recently, leaders have failed to take the action required to tackle

- Newly appointed officers within the academy trust took swift action in 2016 to bring new senior leadership to Pheasant Bank. An experienced executive principal and a head of academy took up post in September 2016. They know that the school's performance has been too weak for too long, and have a clear vision for the muchneeded improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and to pupils' behaviour and personal development.
- Over time, leaders have not ensured that additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils has been used effectively. Spending plans have not been precisely targeted to overcome barriers to learning for pupils. As a result, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils have been consistently low. The new headteacher has taken steps to analyse these pupils' specific needs and has devised a new plan, which is better focused on improving their progress.
- The new senior leaders have taken rapid action to improve the quality of teaching and learning. They have improved the rigour with which teachers' performance is managed and undertake regular checks on the quality of pupils' work. Teachers are benefiting from a range of coaching support and training which is helping to improve their skills and subject knowledge. Some of the weakest teaching has been eradicated and teaching has been strengthened in Year 6. Leaders know, however, that there is much more to do to ensure that teaching is consistently securing good progress for pupils in all year groups and in all subjects.
- Senior leaders have introduced a new system to track individual pupils' performance in key subjects. They use this information to hold teachers to account, on a weekly basis, for the gains pupils are making in their learning. This has accelerated the progress made by pupils in upper key stage 2 over the past term. Leaders appreciate that the system needs further refinements, so that they can carefully check the proportions of pupils and groups of pupils making consistently strong progress, in all subject areas, from their starting points.
- Leaders have not made the best use of additional funding since the previous inspection to improve the outcomes achieved by pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Systems to check pupils' progress have not previously been robust enough to identify gaps in pupils' learning. As a result, the progress made by pupils has been inadequate. A new leader has taken over this area of responsibility and has ensured that teachers now have a better understanding of the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- A number of leaders, including subject leaders, are new to their roles. They are beginning to have a positive impact on their areas of leadership. For example, the new mathematics leader has introduced a programme of 'same-day intervention', which is



helping pupils to catch up in mathematics. The trust recognises that these leaders require support to develop the skills they need to improve the outcomes achieved by pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

- Since the previous inspection, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning had declined significantly. Leaders have taken action to address this and records for the current academic year show that the number of incidents and exclusions has reduced significantly as pupils adjust to the higher expectations of new leaders. Pupils report that behaviour has improved. Leaders are aware that the behaviour of a small number of pupils still requires improvement and are taking action to address this.
- Over time, the curriculum has not prepared pupils well enough in reading, writing and mathematics to access the next stage of their education. The new leadership team has made rapid improvements to the curriculum in these key areas, but these have not yet had the time needed to significantly improve the progress made by pupils in all year groups. Leaders have begun to improve the wider curriculum through, for example, recent work in Year 3 where 'ancient Romans' visited the school to help pupils with their work in history. During the inspection, pupils in Year 5 showed a good understanding of social history when writing about the experiences of different passengers on the Titanic. Leaders recognise that there is more to do to ensure that pupils benefit from a balanced curriculum, particularly in the development of their scientific knowledge and skills.
- Over time, leaders failed to ensure that pupils develop the tolerance and respect which they need to become good citizens in modern Britain. In 2015/16, incidents of pupils using discriminatory language were too high. The new leadership team has taken effective action to address this and racist incidents have reduced this year. The work of the headteacher to introduce pupils to inspirational role models, such as Malala Yousafzai, has contributed positively to pupils' moral and spiritual development.
- The executive principal and the headteacher are clear about what they have achieved so far and know what still needs to be done. The school's development plan is focused on the most important priorities and reflects leaders' ambition for improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment. Leaders recognise, however, that they have not set precise enough targets for the progress being made by all pupils and groups of pupils so that they can keep a careful check on the impact of their work.
- The executive principal and headteacher demonstrate a relentless determination to provide the quality of education that pupils deserve. Both leaders are well respected by pupils. They have the confidence of staff, who appreciate the support they have received to help them work towards the high expectations set by leaders. The majority of parents who spoke directly with inspectors were positive about the recent changes at the school. Leaders recognise that they have more work to do to engage with those parents who have been unhappy with aspects of the school's performance.
- Additional funding for physical education and sport has been used to good effect. Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities to compete with pupils from other schools. They particularly value the after-school sporting clubs which are well attended and which help them to adopt healthier lifestyles.
- Leaders have taken swift and effective action, since September 2016, to improve the attendance of pupils, which had declined to well below the national average. Their



tenacity has ensured that attendance has improved and is now close to the national average, including for disadvantaged pupils. Far fewer pupils are now persistently absent from school.

New leaders, particularly the executive principal and the headteacher, ably supported by the trust, have demonstrated an impressive track record of improvement in the short time since their arrival. Their successful actions to improve pupils' behaviour and attendance and to eradicate the weakest teaching indicate their strong capacity to bring about the further improvements necessary in the school.

#### Governance of the school

- Until 2016, the academy trust did not take effective action to address the declining performance of the school. On their appointment, new leaders at the trust, working with the school's education advisory board (EAB), took immediate action to strengthen leadership and provide support for the school. These changes have increased the urgency with which issues are being tackled and have led to notable improvements in the behaviour and attendance of pupils.
- The new leaders at the trust and the EAB know the school well. They have deployed a number of senior professionals from within the trust to provide additional leadership support to the school, including an associate vice-principal who is strengthening the teaching capacity in Year 6 and coaching teaching staff across the school. This work is already making a difference to the pace at which pupils are making progress in upper key stage 2.
- Since the appointment of the new leadership team, the trust and the EAB have provided rigorous and effective challenge to senior leaders. The headteacher attends monthly meetings with the trust to explain the impact of her work and discuss any additional support that is needed. Minutes of meetings show that the headteacher is questioned robustly by governors in relation to the outcomes achieved by pupils. Trust leaders recognise, however, that targets in the school's development plan could be more precise about the progress that pupils and groups of pupils make.

### Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that all staff have received the training they need to fulfil their responsibilities in relation to keeping pupils safe. Appropriate records of ongoing safeguarding concerns are kept and leaders engage well with other agencies to share information about pupils where it is necessary. Leaders go the extra mile to get the help pupils need. For example, a senior leader attended a weekend appointment to support a family to ensure that their child was not discharged too soon from a specialist service.
- Governors take appropriate steps to monitor the quality of the school's work to keep pupils safe. They receive information regularly from leaders. However, they do not rely simply on what leaders tell them. They undertake their own checks to assure themselves that safeguarding arrangements are robust.



#### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

#### Inadequate

- Over time, teaching has not enabled pupils to make sufficient progress from their individual starting points. As a result of this weak teaching, many pupils have gaps in their basic skills and knowledge and too few reach the standards in reading, writing and mathematics to give them a good start to their secondary education.
- Teachers and teaching assistants do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. On too many occasions, pupils do not complete their work, compose a poor-quality response or write very little in their workbooks. Leaders are working hard to help teachers to recognise what pupils are capable of and this is beginning to make a difference in upper key stage 2, but is not yet consistently evident in all classes across the school.
- Teachers do not always set work or plan activities which challenge pupils at the right level for their ability. The most able pupils are often expected to work at the pace of other pupils in the class, when they are capable of moving on to other work more quickly. Too often, teachers provide too much support and guidance to middle-attaining and the most able pupils so that they do not have to think for themselves. Some lower-attaining pupils are not given enough time to master aspects of their learning. As a result of this, too many pupils are making slow progress in a range of subjects.
- Teaching in subjects such as history, geography, art and science has been weak over time. Current pupils' workbooks show that teachers are making links between subjects. For example, pupils have applied their historical knowledge to their writing in English lessons. However, pupils are not yet reaching the standards of which they are capable across the wider curriculum. In particular, too little time is devoted to the development of pupils' skills in science, and achievement remains weak in this key subject.
- Some teaching assistants do not provide effective support for pupils in the classroom, particularly those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. While teaching assistants try to ensure that pupils complete their work, at times they lack the subject knowledge to address pupils' misconceptions as they emerge. Some teaching assistants do not respond promptly and appropriately to pupils' low-level misbehaviour. As a result, the progress made by pupils who require support is variable.
- A few parents expressed some well-founded concerns about the quality of homework that pupils receive. Leaders acknowledge that there is more to do to ensure that homework provides sufficient challenge at the right level for pupils.
- New leaders have begun to tackle the weaknesses in teaching. In mathematics, teachers have received training to help them deliver the new national curriculum and to use their assessments to identify the gaps in pupils' learning. This is enabling teachers to intervene quickly when pupils have misconceptions. However, due to the legacy of poor teaching, many pupils still cannot rapidly recall basic number facts, such as multiplication tables, and this is holding them back. Leaders recognise that teachers do not yet provide enough opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge through problem-solving.
- New leaders have introduced a new approach to teaching writing. Pupils are now writing more frequently, although many still struggle to write at sufficient length.



Teachers are now modelling key features, such as figurative language, but pupils do not have a good understanding of how they should use these to suit the audience and purpose of their writing. For example, pupils do not recognise that there are different styles of writing and that not all require elaborate, descriptive language.

- Leaders have introduced a new approach to teaching higher-level reading skills to urgently address the weaknesses in pupils' achievement in reading. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the new books that they are reading in class, which have been carefully chosen to interest them. Teachers are now beginning to set more demanding questions which require pupils to make deductions about the plot and characters in the stories they read. However, teachers do not set clear expectations for the quality of the written responses pupils make to these questions. Pupils do not yet have the skills they require to substantiate their opinions effectively with evidence from the text. This limits their ability to reach nationally expected standards.
- Additional staffing has been deployed into Year 6 this academic year to improve the outcomes achieved by pupils. An associate vice-principal and a director of learning from the trust are providing targeted teaching and support to groups of pupils to help them catch up with aspects of their learning. This teaching is securing more rapid progress from Year 6 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders have acted quickly since September 2016 to improve the quality of marking and feedback that pupils receive from their teachers. They have ensured that all teachers consistently follow the school's assessment policy. Pupils value this 'live' feedback during lessons and are enthusiastic about their role in identifying how confident they feel about their learning. Pupils' workbooks show that teachers' marking is helping pupils to improve their work.

#### Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement** 

#### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- In September 2016, leaders identified that pupils' attitudes to learning were not supporting good progress. They worked closely with teachers to develop pupils' resilience, independence and perseverance and their willingness to 'have a go'. Most pupils recognise that they have improved this aspect of their personal development but a minority of pupils remain too reliant on adult intervention to ensure that they work hard in lessons.
- During 2015/16, incidents of pupils using discriminatory language were high. New leaders have taken action to develop pupils' respect for others and have further curricular provision planned to address this vitally important aspect of pupils' personal development. This academic year, records show that incidents have reduced. In meetings with inspectors, pupils were clear that name-calling, particularly when linked to race or religion, is unacceptable.
- Pupils have faith in their teachers and other staff to help them if they have worries or concerns. They informed inspectors that one of the best features of the school is that adults listen to them and give them a say in some aspects of their education. They



enjoy the chance to choose the specific rewards for their good attendance.

- Pupils have a good understanding of the risks to their safety when they are working online in school or accessing the internet at home. Pupils know that they should protect their passwords and their personal information and that they should not respond to any communication from strangers. They recognise different types of bullying, including cyber bullying, and are confident about the action they would take to deal with this.
- A very few pupils attend alternative provision to meet their needs. Leaders ensure that pupils are kept safe and make daily checks on their attendance.

#### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Over time, leaders had not taken effective action to secure consistently positive behaviour from all pupils. During the summer term of 2016, the new academy trust officers reviewed the policy for behaviour and set stricter expectations for pupils' conduct around school and in lessons. This initially resulted in a very high number of fixed-term exclusions. This academic year, as pupils have adjusted to meet leaders' high expectations, far fewer pupils have been excluded. Pupils recognise that behaviour has improved significantly.
- Across the school, the vast majority of pupils conduct themselves well. They are polite, respect others and take pride in their work. Parents, pupils and senior leaders are correct in identifying that there is a small minority of pupils who do not behave as well as others and very occasionally disturb learning in classrooms. This is particularly the case where teachers and other staff do not consistently apply the high expectations set by new leaders.
- Pupils are extremely positive about the 'points' they receive for good behaviour and attendance. They value the rewards that they can purchase from the school 'shop' with their points, such as stationery, books and even tablet devices. This approach is motivating most pupils to make the right choices about their personal conduct.
- During 2015/16, pupils' attendance declined and was below the national average. An above-average proportion of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities were frequently absent from school. This academic year, attendance has improved for all pupils and is now very close to the national average. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has also reduced significantly and is now close to the national average.

#### **Outcomes for pupils**

#### Inadequate

- Over time, the progress made by pupils from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics has been too slow. As a result, too many pupils lack the skills they need when they transfer to secondary school. In the academic year 2015/2016, pupils in Year 6 did not reach the government's minimum standards for progress and attainment.
- Too few pupils are working in line with national age-related expectations in subjects such as history, geography, art and science because teaching is not meeting their



needs in these areas of the curriculum. The work of new leaders is beginning to make a positive difference to pupils' progress in some of these subjects, but there is more to do, particularly in science, to ensure that pupils reach the standards of which they are capable.

- The progress made by the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, has been well below expected levels in reading and mathematics over time. Teachers do not yet have high enough expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve. Current work in pupils' workbooks shows that too few are on track to reach the highest levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils has been consistently weak over time. In the past, the pupil premium spending has not been targeted precisely enough to enable pupils to make more rapid progress to catch up to the nationally expected levels of attainment by the time they leave Year 6. New leaders have reviewed the use of this funding and there are some early signs that progress has quickened for this group of pupils in Years 5 and 6 since September 2016.
- New leaders recognise that the progress made by pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been too low over time. Senior leaders have taken urgent steps to ensure that teachers have a better understanding of the needs of each pupil. Leaders have been clear about the responsibilities that teachers have to meet these special educational needs. As a result of this, some pupils' workbooks show that their progress is beginning to accelerate, but this is not consistent in all classes across the school.
- Scrutiny of pupils' current workbooks indicates that, since September 2016, progress for many pupils has begun to increase as a result of the strategies introduced by new leaders. This is more apparent in Years 5 and 6, but leaders know that there is much more to do to ensure that all pupils are making the progress of which they are capable.



# **School details**

Unique reference number	137455
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10019752

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	352
Appropriate authority	The academy trust
Chair	Chris Mitchell
Headteacher	Pippa Robinson
Telephone number	01302 868 252
Website	www.pheasantbankacademy.org.uk
Email address	info@pheasantbankacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 September 2014

#### Information about this school

- Pheasant Bank Academy is part of the Delta Academies Trust, previously known as the Schools Partnership Trust.
- The headteacher and executive principal took up their posts in September 2016. The executive principal spends two days each week at the school and is a national leader of education.
- The trust is providing a range of formal support to the school, including the secondment of an associate vice-principal, and support for teachers and leaders at all levels.
- This school is a junior school catering for pupils aged seven to 11 and is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support is well above the national average.



- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is just above the national average.
- The school did not meet requirements on the publication of information relating to outcomes achieved by pupils in 2016 and information about pupil premium spending on its website at the start of the inspection. Leaders rectified these omissions during the inspection.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about governance arrangements.
- In 2016, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.



# Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a range of lessons and also made some shorter visits to classrooms. The headteacher and executive principal observed lessons jointly with the lead inspector.
- Inspectors listened to a range of pupils read and reviewed the work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors talked informally to pupils in lessons and around the school and held formal meetings with pupils, including some of the most able pupils.
- Inspectors held discussions with the executive principal, the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and class teachers. In addition to this, inspectors met with members of the EAB and senior representatives from the Delta Academies Trust, including the chief executive.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school's performance, school development planning and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and the quality of teaching and learning. Inspectors also reviewed the school's policies and documentation linked to safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors took into account the views of parents during the inspection through discussions with parents at the start of the school day, a telephone communication from a parent and through the 16 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

#### **Inspection team**

Claire Brown, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lynne Selkirk	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Birch	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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