

Hexthorpe Primary School

Urban Road, Hexthorpe, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN4 0HH

Inspection dates

15–16 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment has been consistently below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics in key stages 1 and 2 over time.
- Leaders are not clear enough about the progress of different groups of pupils. Therefore, pupils' needs are not always addressed sufficiently.
- Teachers do not always use assessment information precisely enough to tailor learning activities to meet pupils' diverse learning needs and their varying stages of development. Therefore, not all pupils are making enough progress, particularly in key stage 2.
- Subject leadership is underdeveloped. Subject leaders do not yet have enough impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Leaders do not have rigorous enough reporting systems to evidence the impact of their actions. They are therefore not clear about which strategies are having the greatest impact to help them secure more rapid improvement.
- Adults do not always have high enough expectations of behaviour when pupils are outside. This results in some unsafe behaviour at breaktimes.
- Leadership of provision for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is not effective in evaluating and increasing the impact of the support pupils receive.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is improving after a period of significant change. Leaders enlisted the support of a multi-academy trust and improvements are picking up pace. Current pupils are beginning to make better progress.
- Children make strong progress in early years from often very low starting points.
- Achievement in phonics by Year 2 is very close to the national average.
- Staff receive effective support and training. Consequently, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving.
- Leaders have created a vigilant safeguarding culture.
- Leaders' actions are resulting in rapidly improving attendance and behaviour.
- Pupils are proud of their school and are interested in their learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure consistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils' attainment and progress rapidly improve by ensuring that:
 - accurate assessment information is used to plan learning that is well matched to pupils' stages of development and is sufficiently challenging
 - adults swiftly address pupils' mistakes and misconceptions during lessons
 - provision for pupils in the early stages of language development is appropriate to their needs so they can catch up quickly.
- Devise a more partnered approach between school leaders and the trust for determining the progress made by cohorts and groups of pupils so that:
 - analysis of assessment information gives greater clarity about the progress made by groups of pupils throughout the school
 - specific targets are set for groups and cohorts of pupils, with clearly identified measures of success to help gauge the impact of school improvement action and speed up the rate of pupils' progress.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - rigorously addressing inconsistencies in teaching and learning
 - rapidly improving pupils' progress so that a greater proportion reach and exceed the expectations at the end of each key stage
 - developing consistent systems that enable leaders to routinely evaluate and demonstrate the impact of their actions on pupils' achievement
 - making more effective use of additional funding to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - creating the capacity for subject leaders to contribute more significantly to improving the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility.
- Improve pupils' behaviour at breaktimes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The principal has made some critical improvements since her appointment in 2015. For example, all inadequate teaching has been eliminated and safeguarding is now a strength of the school. However, due to a legacy of underachievement and remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, actions are not yet resulting in consistently good progress across the school and particularly in key stage 2.
- The school has undergone substantial change in recent years. A sharp increase in pupil numbers, a high proportion of pupils leaving and joining the school throughout the year and staffing turbulence have hindered the speed of improvement.
- Leaders' action plans often do not contain precise enough measures of success to help leaders check on the impact of actions taken to improve pupils' progress. Similarly, leaders do not routinely analyse and evaluate the impact of the school improvement activities they adopt on the progress of pupil groups, for example pupils who speak English as an additional language. Consequently, leaders are not aware which strategies are proving most successful in securing the rapid improvements needed.
- Leaders have not effectively evaluated the use of the extra funding to support disadvantaged pupils or those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Therefore, they have not been able to determine the impact of the support they receive on pupils' attainment and progress and make adjustments where necessary. However, leaders have used funding effectively to provide support to meet pupils' social and emotional needs. This enables pupils to access learning more readily.
- Most subject leaders are only just beginning to make checks on the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility. Therefore, they have been unable to contribute sufficiently to the self-evaluation cycle and improvement planning process. This has meant that their capacity to improve pupils' achievement has been limited.
- The multi-academy trust has implemented an assessment system that regularly tracks the performance of individual pupils. However, it is not yet providing leaders with sufficient understanding of the progress made by specific cohorts and groups of pupils over time.
- Leaders are taking effective action to increase consistency in the quality of teaching. Staff are able to observe and learn from the good practice of lead teachers within the multi-academy trust. Teachers, including those at the early stages of their career, feel well supported and have an understanding of what they need to do to improve their teaching through the performance management process, training and informal feedback they receive. Consequently, outcomes have improved in early years and key stage 1 and current pupils are beginning to show signs of improving progress in key stage 2.
- Leaders' tenacious actions to improve attendance and behaviour have resulted in more rapid improvements recently.
- Leaders are keen to provide pupils with a curriculum that interests them and broadens their experiences through trips and visitors. Consequently, pupils are becoming more enthusiastic about their learning in a range of subjects beyond English and

mathematics. However, the curriculum is not yet having sufficient impact in raising standards throughout the school.

- The wider curriculum provides opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn about different faiths and value the range of languages spoken by each other. Pupils understand about British values such as tolerance and can describe how the school's values are encouraged and celebrated. The school council makes a valuable contribution to pupils' understanding of being involved in whole-school decision making.
- Leaders use the primary school physical education (PE) and sport funding to offer a range of sporting equipment and activities. This is helping pupils to understand the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle.

Governance of the school

- The transition management board secures appropriate and effective support for school leaders through a range of trust-wide functions. For example, lead teachers model effective teaching strategies. This is proving instrumental in more swiftly improving the quality of teaching.
- External reviews of the school's effectiveness and regular visits to school help the transition management board check on the reliability and accuracy of leaders' information. However, a lack of precise targets for groups and cohorts and the absence of measurable milestones in leaders' action plans limit the transition management board from holding school leaders to account with even greater rigour.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The principal was quick to identify safeguarding as a high priority when taking up her post. She immediately established a pastoral team that has effectively developed safeguarding provision so that it is now a strength of the school.
- Staff are clear about safeguarding procedures as a result of the induction and continued training they receive. Staff report concerns quickly and leaders respond with urgency.
- The school works closely with external agencies to get pupils the help and protection they need as quickly as possible. On several occasions, records show that leaders have challenged external agencies to improve their provision in order for pupils' needs to be met in a more effective and timely manner.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable and contributes to pupils' inconsistent progress. Although improving, teaching is not yet securely good apart from in early years. Turbulence in staffing has hampered development.
- Teachers do not always plan tasks which are well matched to pupils' learning needs and this prevents pupils from catching up rapidly and limits the progress they make.

- Teachers are aware that many pupils are working below the expected standard for their age and therefore attempt to help pupils consolidate basic reading and writing skills. However, this is not secure throughout the school as leaders have not developed effective strategies for meeting pupils' widely varying needs and stages of development. For example, there is not a consistent enough approach to supporting pupils who are new to learning English.
- Teachers generally check on pupils' understanding of what is being learned. However, at times, teachers do not address errors and misconceptions quickly enough. For example, pupils' books show examples of number reversals which go repeatedly uncorrected. This results in incorrect skills being reinforced.
- Adults usually have high expectations of pupils' learning. However, pupils' books demonstrate how their attitudes to learning vary. Differing standards in presentation and productivity within classes and between classes are seen.
- A new approach to the teaching of mathematics is beginning to result in greater consistency. For example, pupils have opportunities to develop their fluency, reasoning and problem solving. However, where activities are not pitched accurately to pupils' needs, the necessary progress through a unit of work is not as evident.
- Teachers are receiving effective support from lead teachers provided by the multi-academy trust. A current emphasis on the teaching of reading is supporting teachers in developing their teaching of reading comprehension skills.
- A well-structured approach to the teaching of phonics helps pupils to develop the skills of blending sounds to read words and is resulting in improving phonics outcomes. Pupils use their phonics skills effectively to read unknown words and are encouraged to read regularly by staff.
- Teaching across the curriculum is helping pupils begin to make meaningful links with their learning in different subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Pupils generally feel safe and they know how to report bullying. However, they are aware that despite improvements in behaviour, some bullying continues.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning can vary from class to class. This usually depends on the quality of teaching and the expectations staff have of their learning and behaviour.
- Staff create a nurturing atmosphere and relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils are polite and well mannered. They are proud to talk about their learning and their school.
- The pastoral team makes sure that pupils' emotional well-being is supported well. Links with a range of professionals and external agencies support pupils to be ready for learning. A whole-school approach to supporting pupils' social and emotional needs has had a positive impact on improving pupils' attitudes to learning and has contributed to

improved attendance and decreasing exclusions.

- Leaders actively seek and value pupils' views. Pupils are encouraged to make a contribution to school life, for example through the school council and fund-raising activities. As a result, pupils are developing a sense of responsibility and are proud of their school and the opportunities it provides.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. At breaktimes, particularly in key stage 2, some pupils do not exercise self-discipline and engage in unsafe behaviour. Staff do not have the same high expectations of pupils' behaviour in the playground as they do in the school building.
- Pupils usually follow routines well and behave sensibly as they move around school. Classrooms are mainly calm, but occasional low-level disruption sometimes interferes with learning.
- Pupils and parents recognise the recent improvements in pupils' behaviour. A whole-school behaviour system, raised staff expectations and effective management of incidents have resulted in a considerable reduction in the number of incidents, including exclusions.
- Leaders have been relentless in their determination to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence. Over time, the pastoral team has built strong relationships with the local community and has raised parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of good attendance. The introduction of daily home visits to check on pupils who are absent has resulted in attendance rapidly improving since September 2017 to above 96% overall and for all pupil groups. Persistent absence has also sharply decreased.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Standards in English and mathematics have been consistently below the national average at the end of key stages 1 and 2. Too many pupils are not prepared well enough for secondary school because their basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics are not secure. However, pupils' outcomes at the end of each key stage are affected by high levels of pupil mobility. Most pupils who join the school other than at the start of Nursery or Reception speak little or no English and are sometimes new to education.
- The progress that current pupils make is showing recent improvement. However, inconsistent teaching over time means that progress has not been rapid enough to ensure that pupils catch up from previous underachievement, particularly in key stage 2.
- While some early language development needs are being addressed, often most effectively in early years, not enough pupils secure basic skills to support their learning across the curriculum. Consequently, pupils who speak English as an additional language do not make rapid enough progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported to meet their targets. However, leaders do not sufficiently evaluate the impact of this

provision to make decisions about how best to meet their needs.

- Despite increased opportunities for pupils to reason and solve problems, current pupils are making variable progress in mathematics. New approaches are yet to be embedded.
- As a result of the improving quality of teaching, learning and assessment, pupils made much better progress by the end of key stage 1 in 2017. The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard was similar to or better than other pupils nationally with the same starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils particularly enjoy their learning across the wider curriculum, beyond English and mathematics. While pupils have a broad and balanced curriculum, subject leaders are not routinely checking the impact of teaching on the standards that pupils achieve.
- School improvement actions to improve reading and writing outcomes are beginning to take effect. Through studying 'words of the week', pupils are extending their vocabulary. Their writing books show how they often independently use newly acquired words in subsequent pieces of writing. Pupils are also showing a strong interest in reading and talk enthusiastically about books they are reading in class.
- The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check rose to 62% in 2017. However, this does remain below the national average of 81%. By Year 2, the proportion who met the standard also improved to 82%, compared with the national average of 92%. Pupils who joined the school in Nursery or Reception, and who have had more time at the school, make the strongest progress in phonics.

Early years provision

Good

- Children make strong progress from their starting points, which in many areas of learning are well below those that are typical for their age when they enter school.
- Leaders have an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the setting. They have tailored the provision to place a focus on children's reading, writing and mathematics development. Leaders know the communities and their families well. They place a high priority on developing strong and positive partnerships from day one of the children's education. These strong relationships are a strength of early years.
- Leaders' ambition to involve parents in school life and their child's learning gets off to a strong start, with daily opportunities for parents to start the day's activities with their child. This calm and positive start to the day gives children a chance to quickly settle in and get involved in learning. It gives good opportunities for parents and staff to communicate. Consequently, all parents spoken to before school said that they were happy with the school and the care their child receives. They were unanimous in their view that their children are happy and enjoy school. They value the time that staff give them as parents, in involving them in their child's learning.
- The positive and focused start to the day continues when parents leave. Adults have established clear routines with high expectations of behaviour and learning. Adults know the children well. They are aware of each child's next learning steps and help them to make the progress needed through carefully targeted small-group and individual work. Adults model effective language structures well so that children's

speech and language skills are effectively developed.

- New starters who join the school at times other than the start of the year often speak little or no English. Staff support them well so that they soon gain the confidence and language skills needed to begin learning to read and write.
- Staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously and ensure that the statutory welfare requirements are met.
- In the Nursery setting, opportunities for boys in particular to develop their basic skills are less strong than in Reception. The writing area, for example, is not as exciting or enticing as the creative area where many boys wanted to learn.
- Although children make strong progress from their starting points, since a significant proportion of them have not reached a good level of development by the time they leave early years, they are not well prepared for the challenges of the national curriculum in Year 1. Leaders have recognised this and have put plans into action to develop the Year 1 environment and teaching so that these are better suited to pupils' needs.

School details

Unique reference number	143194
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10023837

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	509
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mr Kim Gray
Principal	Mrs Nicola Parker-Watts
Telephone number	01302 852245
Website	www.hexthorpe.doncaster.sch.uk
Email address	admin@hexthorpe.doncaster.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Hexthorpe Primary School converted to become an academy as part of the Astrea Multi-Academy Trust in September 2016. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding. Since the last inspection of the predecessor school in 2007, there have been significant changes to staffing and leadership. There has also been an increase in the pupil admission number for the school and the number of pupils on roll is now substantially higher. The school takes a growing proportion of pupils who do not speak English as their first language, many of whom have little or no English when joining the school. Some pupils have not experienced an educational setting before and begin school at times other than the start of Nursery or Reception.
- Since becoming an academy, the school has had a transition management board until a local governing body is established. The transition management board is accountable to the trust board for the school's progress.

- The multi-academy trust provides a wide range of support to develop school leadership and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. For example, lead teachers for different subjects visit the school to demonstrate teaching strategies and to coach and develop staff.
- The number of pupils leaving and joining the school throughout the year is very high.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- A large proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and the proportion who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is lower than the average.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school meets the government's current 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.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching throughout the school. Some observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors listened to pupils read. They talked to pupils about their school and evaluated the quality of work in a sample of pupils' books.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, vice-principals, assistant vice-principals, subject leaders and the pastoral team. They also met with the chair of the transition management board, and the director of education and chief executive officer from the multi-academy trust. A trustee also took part in a meeting by telephone.
- Discussions took place with a group of teachers, including those who are newly or recently qualified, about the support and development they receive.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work in books, along with the school's information on pupils' achievement to ascertain the progress that pupils are making.
- A range of documentation was considered, including the school's self-evaluation, records of the monitoring of teaching and learning, the school improvement plan, information relating to the attendance and behaviour of pupils, safeguarding and child protection records, and minutes from transition management board meetings. Documents outlining the arrangements for the use of pupil premium funding and the primary school PE and sport funding were also considered.
- Inspectors spoke to parents informally at the start of the school day in order to seek their views about the school.

Inspection team

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Peter Heaton	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Cook	Ofsted Inspector
Hazel Henson	Ofsted Inspector
Kate Rowley	Her Majesty's 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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