

New Pastures Primary School

Pitt Street, Mexborough, South Yorkshire S64 0LT

Inspection dates

17–18 October 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
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

- Since the amalgamation of the infant and the junior schools, school leaders and governors have worked hard to address the substantially lower than national average pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. Pupils' outcomes improved in 2018, but the progress that pupils make over their time in school is not consistently good.
- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning in key stage 2 remain. The good progress that pupils make in key stage 1 stalls when they enter key stage 2 and pupils struggle to catch up again by the end of Year 6.
- Leaders have identified a substantial difference in the achievement of boys and girls and know that they have more to do accelerate boys' progress.
- Pupils in key stage 2 do not have enough opportunities to practise their skills in writing. They are not given clear enough direction in how to improve their work and expectations of what they can achieve are not consistently high.
- Pupils' attendance has improved slowly over the last three years but is still below the national average. Some pupils are late to arrive at school and miss the important learning at the start of the day.
- Leaders have had much to do to improve the school and they make frequent checks on all aspects of the school's work. However, plans and actions are not fully focused on the areas of teaching and learning that need the most rapid improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- Strong leadership, particularly from the headteacher, is directing the changes needed to improve outcomes for pupils.
- Good teaching of phonics supports pupils well in developing their early reading skills.
- Pupils in key stage 1 apply their English and mathematics skills well in other subjects.
- Pupils' conduct is good. They are keen to talk about and share their learning.
- Adults in early years make sure that children get a good start in developing their basic skills. Children enjoy their learning.
- Pupils are excited by, and develop their knowledge and skills in, a wide and varied curriculum.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Refine plans for improvement, so that they highlight more clearly the areas of teaching that most need to improve and the groups of pupils who need to make the most rapid progress to catch up.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in key stage 2 so that pupils make consistently good progress by:
 - ensuring that the good progress made by pupils in writing in key stage 1 is sustained through the precise development and application of their skills and knowledge in key stage 2
 - making sure that teachers plan carefully for writing activities, using their assessment of what pupils can do to move their learning on swiftly
 - giving pupils, particularly boys, more frequent opportunities to practise their writing skills in engaging activities across the curriculum
 - checking that the new mathematics programme is meeting the needs of all pupils, particularly the most able
 - ensuring that all teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and help to instil in pupils a sense of pride and motivation in their work.
- Continue to work with parents and carers to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Considerable change brought about by the amalgamation of the previous infant and junior schools has been well managed by leaders. The ambition to improve the overall quality of education for pupils over their primary years is starting to be realised, but this work has not been without its challenges. Leaders have taken effective action to improve the progress made by pupils over their time in key stage 2 but know that there is still more work to be done.
- The headteacher's strong leadership has created a positive commitment to improvement from staff. She has worked tirelessly to make sure that everyone feels part of one team across the two sites. Staff feel valued and listened to and are prepared to work hard to ensure that the school improves.
- Leadership overall is strong. Senior leaders, including the deputy headteacher, and middle leaders have clearly defined roles and know what needs to improve in their areas of responsibility. They have shown a firm commitment to ensuring that pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, while continuing to improve pupils' progress in English and mathematics.
- When pupils' progress in reading through key stage 2 was particularly slow in 2017, leaders immediately took effective action. Work with the local authority and specialist leaders supported school leaders in implementing a range of strategies that have engaged pupils in reading for enjoyment and helped them to develop their skills. This work is evidenced in the work on display around the school and in animated conversations with pupils who speak confidently about their favourite books and authors. High priority has been given to involving parents in this work. During the inspection, parents of pupils in Year 2 attended a reading meeting. They said that they had been given useful ideas to encourage their children to read at home, and that they were looking forward to trying these out.
- Realising that the mathematics strategies teachers were using were not having enough impact on speeding up pupils' progress, leaders carefully researched new programmes. A new system for teaching mathematics started in September 2018. It is early days, but leaders have a good understanding of the checks they must make to ensure that all pupils are making good progress. Leaders report that they are already seeing improvement in the pupils' ability to talk about their tasks and in their engagement in mathematics. This was true of most of the learning seen during the inspection. Leaders realise that early indications are that this system is supporting lower- and middle-ability pupils well, but that they need to keep a close eye on whether it is sufficiently challenging the most able pupils.
- Leaders with responsibility for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and those who are in receipt of the additional pupil premium funding have ensured that the needs of these pupils are well met. Leaders have identified potential barriers pupils have to learning and have put effective support and resources in place to ensure that they make good progress academically, socially and emotionally.
- The sports premium is used effectively to develop teaching skills and provide a wider range of physical activities and clubs for pupils to take part in. Strong links are made

with developing a healthy lifestyle and supporting pupils' social and emotional well-being.

- Leaders make sure that teachers and teaching assistants access a range of training, well matched to the school's priorities, to support improvement. Staff members are positive about professional development opportunities and say that these have increased their confidence as well as their skills.
- Leaders have refined the documentation they produce for staff and governors about pupils' attainment and progress. This is concise and well understood. The school improvement plan identifies the actions leaders are taking as a result of their evaluations of the school. However, in the large number of areas the school has needed to address, the specific aspects of pupils' progress that most need improvement are not always highlighted well enough.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This is because they receive detailed information from school leaders and the local authority about the school's performance. Governors have specific responsibilities for subjects and areas of accountability, for example in safeguarding. This has helped them to disperse their work and created a good overall understanding of the effectiveness of school leaders' work.
- Governors have a clear view of the challenges that leaders have faced when the schools amalgamated. They have confidence in school leaders and speak with passion about the staff team's positivity to the changes that have been needed. Governors rightly highlight the care that pupils receive in the school and the positive and respectful relationships that have been created between pupils and adults.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures because leaders make sure that staff receive timely training and updates. Records of identified concerns and actions that are taken are comprehensive, monitored closely and fit for purpose. The school works effectively with external agencies, seeking further advice and support when necessary, so that pupils' needs are well met.
- Leaders have a good understanding of potential local community issues. These are carefully considered, and the curriculum is used effectively to deliver important messages to pupils about keeping safe. Pupils trust school staff to provide help when they need it. They are able to explain a wide range of lessons and assemblies that take place to help them learn about keeping safe. This includes road safety sessions, visits from the emergency services and online safety activities.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- School leaders, governors and the local authority describe the weaknesses seen in the progress made by pupils in key stage 2 at the time of the schools' amalgamation.

These are evidenced further in the significantly lower than national average outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in 2017. Clear direction from leaders, staff training and the whole-school dedication to improvement have started to have a positive effect on pupils' progress.

- Lack of pace and challenge in some teaching results in pupils becoming disengaged and making slow progress. Teaching in lower key stage 2 does not consistently meet the needs of the most able pupils, who sometimes sit and wait for their peers, or the lower-ability pupils, who are not consistently well enough supported to make strong progress.
- Observations of learning and scrutiny of pupils' work confirm leaders' views that there is a considerable difference between the learning of girls and boys.
- Pupils in key stage 1 have the opportunity to regularly write at length. They are given clear direction as to how to improve their work, and are encouraged to have pride in their work. They make good progress as a result. Over time, the expectations of pupils when they first enter key stage 2 have not been as high. Their progress has slowed, and numerous systems of support have been needed to help them to catch up again by the end of key stage 2. Some of this lack of pace and clear direction at the start of key stage 2 continues.
- The school's policy for identifying mistakes in spelling and supporting pupils in improvement is not consistently applied. As a result, pupils' misconceptions often go unchecked and their spelling does not improve.
- The new programme for mathematics is being implemented consistently by teachers and teaching assistants. Early indications are that the systematic delivery of strategies is ensuing that pupils of lower- and middle-ability are well supported in keeping up. It is too soon to be sure that the most able pupils are being suitably challenged.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have successfully employed a wide range of strategies to improve pupils' reading. They have built effectively on the good start to reading that pupils have through frequent rhymes, stories and songs and successful phonics teaching in early years and key stage 1. Adults read aloud to pupils regularly and lower-ability pupils in particular have frequent opportunities to read. Areas of school are used to celebrate work initiated by reading high-quality texts, and also to invite other pupils to deepen their knowledge, for example, at information stations. Pupils show enthusiasm for reading, especially through strategies such as 'reading heroes' and 'books at bedtime'. The majority of pupils read with accuracy, fluency and a good understanding. Those who need to catch up are supported well.
- The curriculum is planned effectively to develop pupils' knowledge and skills across a broad range of subjects. This is a strength of the school's work. Pupils demonstrate good subject-specific knowledge and vocabulary. However, teachers in key stage 2 do not link skills in writing and mathematics to other curriculum areas. Reluctant writers are not expected to write in other subjects, so they do not see its importance or have the chance to practise and improve their skills. Teachers miss the opportunity to inspire boys to write through their enjoyment and engagement in other subjects. This means that pupils develop the skills, for example, to carry out a successful investigation, but are unable to record or report their findings effectively and confidently. This contrasts with the opportunities pupils have in key stage 1. For example, pupils, including boys, eagerly show off their 'amazing animals' work, where they have explored different animal habitats, created their own miniature habits, and then produced high-quality information books.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy their learning. They have confidence to talk about their work and appreciate the guidance they are given from adults. This is because adults encourage positive communication and good relationships right from the word go when children start school.
- Playground buddies are appointed to help pupils with friendships. One child explained, 'If someone doesn't want to play with another person, I help them find another friend to play with.' Another added that adults are always there to help if there is a problem, but that children often help each other too. Pupils say that bullying is rare, but that if there is a problem, adults will help them sort it out.
- The breakfast clubs on both sites provide a positive, calm and welcoming start to the day. Pupils cooperate well with each other and relax with a wide range of activities.
- The school's inclusive ethos is threaded through all aspects of the school's work. Individuals are well supported because their emotional and behavioural needs are understood.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Good relationships promote good conduct from the pupils, in class and also at less structured times of the day. Pupils are friendly and polite. They have a good understanding of what respect is and generally demonstrate this to those around them. They listen carefully to adults and give positive responses. Where teaching does not engage them, they do not generally misbehave, but they drift off and lose motivation.
- Pupils interact well with each other at breaktimes. They say that they feel safe and that adults are always around to support them. Playground buddies are very clear about their role and the responsibility they have in checking that playtimes are an enjoyable part of the day.
- Pupils' attendance has shown some improvement over the last few years but is still below the national average. Leaders have a clear system of correspondence with parents when attendance dips, which involves meeting with parents to see how improvement can be supported, as well as involving the education welfare officer when necessary. Some pupils arrive at school late and miss the learning at the start of the day. Leaders and staff reward pupils for good attendance and engage them in competitions between classes, but improvement is slow.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes have improved overall since the infant and junior schools amalgamated, but outcomes for pupils in key stage 2 require further improvement. The proportion of

pupils reaching the expected standard at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 was well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. No pupils reached the higher standard. Provisional results for 2018 demonstrate improvement, but the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading remains below the national average, as does the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standard in all subjects.

- Key stage 2 pupils' work and school assessment information demonstrate that outcomes in different year groups and subjects are varied. Outcomes in writing are weaker than in other subjects. Half of the pupils overall in lower key stage 2 are working below the expected standard in writing.
- The English leader has identified the aspects of the teaching of writing that most need improvement. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work alongside the English leader. This confirmed that the good-quality content and presentation of pupils' written work in key stage 1 is not maintained in lower key stage 2. School policies, for example in the direction given to pupils as to how to improve, and in spelling, are not consistently applied.
- In mathematics, provisional results for 2018 show that there has been a considerable increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard and this is now higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher standard has improved slightly, but is still below the national average.
- Standards in phonics have improved over the last four years. A higher than national average proportion of pupils have achieved the Year 1 phonics standard for the past two years. Outcomes at the expected and higher standards at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently similar to the national average.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their generally lower starting points. This is because of effective leadership and good communication between everyone involved in supporting pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Comprehensive plans to support pupils in receipt of the additional pupil premium funding in making good progress are effective. The progress that pupil premium pupils make has improved, and the gap between these and other pupils is diminishing.

Early years provision

Good

- From their generally lower than typical starting points in Nursery, well-planned provision and good teaching strategies ensure that children make good progress through early years. Adults create a safe environment where children settle quickly, behave well and enjoy their learning.
- High-quality provision in early years is carefully planned to take learning forward, particularly in children's basic skills. The Reception and Nursery indoor and outdoor areas provide exciting opportunities for pupils to play together and try out their skills. Adults model learning in different areas very well, so that children copy their good example and sustain meaningful learning with their friends. For example, during the inspection, children in Nursery independently dressed up as characters from the Little Red Riding Hood story and retold the story with gusto, performing their own part and directing other performers.

- Excellent relationships have been established between the children themselves and with adults. Children feel safe and happy and are eager to have a go at new things. Behaviour is good. Children show kindness to others.
- A substantial proportion of children enter the school with speech and communication skills that are lower than typical for their age. Adults take every opportunity to model and develop good language through all aspects of learning. Rhymes, stories and songs are rehearsed throughout the day, as well as strategies that promote early writing skills and story-writing ideas.
- Staff are well trained in keeping children safe. They make sure that the classroom environment is safe, and that children are taught how to keep themselves safe. They know the children and their families well and make sure that the children's welfare needs are well met.

School details

Unique reference number	106683
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10052872
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	288
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kate French
Headteacher	Pam Belnavis
Telephone number	01709 583271
Website	www.newpasturesprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	head@newpasturesprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Mexborough Pitt Street Infant School and Mexborough Doncaster Road Junior School amalgamated in January 2016 and New Pastures Primary School was opened. Mexborough Pitt Street Infant School was judged to be outstanding at its last inspection in June 2013.
- The school is similar in size to the average-sized primary school.
- About a third of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium additional funding, which is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for their SEN and/or disabilities is lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is lower than the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The early years consist of a Nursery and two Reception classes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a range of subjects in all classes. All of the lessons observed by the lead inspector on day one were accompanied by the headteacher. Some of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher on day two.
- The lead inspector met regularly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors held meetings with the early years leader, the inclusion leader, the lead teachers for English, mathematics, and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, as well as curriculum leaders. The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body and spoke to the school's previous local authority standards and effectiveness partner on the telephone.
- During visits to lessons, inspectors spoke with pupils and looked at their work to find out more about how well they are learning.
- Meetings were held with pupils and the inspectors talked informally with pupils around the school. The lead inspector listened to pupils read and talked with them about reading. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school was observed.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including leaders' evaluation of the school, school improvement planning, and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and the quality of teaching and learning. Inspectors also reviewed the minutes of meetings of the governing body and information relating to safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors met with parents before the school day and at the end of the Year 2 reading meeting for parents. They considered the school's own recent parental questionnaires and feedback forms from a variety of parental workshops. There was one response to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Kate Rowley, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lesley Allwood	Ofsted Inspector
Natasha Greenough	Ofsted Inspector
Larissa Thorpe	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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Manchester
M1 2WD

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