

# St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School

Roberts Road, Balby, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN4 0JN

## Inspection dates

11–12 December 2018

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, ably assisted by her team, provides effective leadership. Their strong actions have revitalised the school ethos and have led to rapid improvement.
- Governors share leaders' passion and ambition to improve. They are knowledgeable and effective in their support. They challenge leaders to ensure that resources are well used to help pupils overcome any barriers to learning.
- Leaders and teachers have a shared ambition that all groups of pupils achieve well from their different starting points. They have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Staff morale is high. Teachers are proud to work at the school and are flourishing under the changes made. Teaching is now good and has resulted in improved outcomes for pupils.
- Effective teaching in the early years ensures that children's learning gets off to a good start.
- In key stages 1 and 2, pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards of attainment by the end of Year 6 have risen. Pupils are better prepared for secondary school. They are increasingly well challenged, although too few pupils, especially the most able, reach the higher standards.
- Work is now underway to improve pupils' achievement in subjects beyond English and mathematics. The skills of some subject leaders in supporting this are still developing.
- The strong pastoral care and attention provided for pupils ensures that they are happy, safe and secure in school. Pupils have every confidence in adults to keep them safe.
- Pupils behave well and show good attitudes to learning. They present their work neatly. Their written work is of a good standard. However, some pupils spell everyday words incorrectly, and these are sometimes not corrected.
- An above-average proportion of pupils join the school at times other than the start of the early years, sometimes speaking little English and often with low starting points. These pupils are making good progress, but they do not make the rapid progress needed to catch up with their peers by the end of key stage 1, especially in reading and writing.
- Parents and carers are positive about, and have confidence in, the school. They especially appreciate the family ethos and the high level of care provided for their children. They recognise and appreciate that the quality of education has been improved. The partnership between home and school has been strengthened. Even so, some would like to be more involved in their children's learning and inspectors agree that there is scope for them to do so.
- Leaders have worked with families to improve pupils' attendance and with some success. However, attendance still remains below average.

## Full report

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

- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, including in the early years, by making sure that:
  - pupils who join the school at times other than at the start of the early years, those are new to learning English and those with low starting points make rapid progress so that they reach the expected standards by the end of Year 2, especially in reading and writing
  - teachers consistently provide pupils, particularly the most able, with challenging work so that a greater proportion of pupils reach the higher standards
  - teachers consistently address pupils' spelling errors to ensure that they do not repeat the same mistakes.
- Continue to strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - further developing the skills of subject leaders so that they effectively improve pupils' achievement in subjects beyond English and mathematics
  - working even more closely with families to improve attendance so that it is at least in line with national average
  - providing parents with more opportunities to become involved in their children's learning.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Since the executive headteacher was appointed in September 2016, she has effectively addressed and swiftly improved the school. She has created a culture that ensures that all staff are fully committed and passionate about improving teaching and outcomes for all pupils. Teaching and pupils' outcomes have improved considerably.
- Senior leaders work closely with the executive headteacher. Together, as a close-knit team, they are unwavering in their desire to secure a good education for all pupils. They have worked tirelessly to transform the school and deal with any underperformance. The leadership of teaching is strong and, as a result, teaching is good and current pupils are making good progress.
- Leaders' work to support newly qualified teachers and those in the early stages of their career is very effective. These teachers say they are well supported and receive personalised support to improve their skills further. As a result, they feel part of a strong team and blossom under the guidance from leaders.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders have developed a stimulating curriculum that broadens pupils' real-life experiences through a wide range of activities, including visits. Pupils develop a wide range of skills. For example, pupils produced interesting writing about washing clothes during Victorian times. However, more work is needed in further developing the leadership of subjects other than English and mathematics so that pupils' progress continues to improve in a wide range of subjects.
- Leaders make good use of the primary physical education and sport funding to provide a varied diet of sporting opportunities for pupils to engage in. These include gymnastics, dance, basketball, football and martial arts. The playground has been enhanced with new painted markings, which helps pupils take part in a wide range of games at breaktimes.
- Leaders make effective use of the pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Leaders and teachers have created bespoke plans to ensure that these pupils make good progress in all that they do. As a result, in 2018 there have been significant improvements in the proportion of disadvantaged pupils reaching age-related expectations.
- Leaders ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well. They make sure that pupils' individual needs are identified and that effective support is provided. Pupils' progress is checked carefully and accurately. Leaders check that teaching assistants are deployed astutely and provide timely support for pupils, particularly those pupils who join the school with little or no English.
- Leaders have increased the emphasis on developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have a greater understanding of the main religions of the world and the belief systems that underpin them. Pupils are highly respectful of one another and respect each other's differences. British values are weaved

seamlessly into the everyday life of the school. For example, pupils use their democratic skills in voting to elect a school council.

- Parents are positive about the school and particularly value the school's caring family atmosphere. They appreciate how well adults care for their children and how their children develop confidence in all that they do. Leaders have set up a parents' forum to strengthen the partnership between home and school, but this is in its infancy. Some parents would like to be more actively involved in their children's learning.
- The local authority and diocese have worked closely together to ensure stability in leadership arrangements. As a result, this has contributed to significant improvements in the school since the last inspection. The school has benefited from working in close partnership with a nearby school. Both the diocese and local authority have provided effective support in challenging and validating leaders' judgements.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors have strengthened the way in which they work with the school. They consider a wealth of information to both challenge and support senior leaders. For example, they ensure that the pupil premium funding is used effectively to improve disadvantaged pupils' achievements so that these pupils achieve at least in line with other pupils nationally.
- Governors give generously of their time and make regular visits to the school. Governor minutes show that they ask searching questions to hold leaders to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements.
- Governors take their safeguarding role very seriously. Many governors have undertaken safer recruitment training and have used their specialist knowledge to ensure that recruitment procedures are strong and effective in keeping pupils safe.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding and vigilance in the school. Leaders give safeguarding the highest priority and provide frequent updates so that staff are fully aware of current guidance and legislation.
- Staff are well trained in protecting pupils from harm. They are confident in recognising any signs of concerns and know how to report any concerns should they arise.
- Parents are kept well informed of how pupils are taught to keep themselves safe. Leaders acted on feedback received at a recent parents' forum to provide a workshop on keeping safe online so that safety messages can be reinforced at home. The school environment is peppered with useful advice on how to keep safe online.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and, overall, is good. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They plan thoughtful lessons that build effectively on what pupils already know and can do. Pupils have strong relationships with staff and typically respond by exhibiting positive attitudes to learning and working hard. Pupils take great pride in their work.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can and should achieve have been raised since the previous inspection. This has been particularly effective in helping pupils to make good progress and to reach the expected standard at the end of each key stage. Teachers now typically provide pupils with more challenging work. However, this approach is not yet consistent. Sometimes, pupils' progress, particularly that of the most able pupils, is still hampered because work lacks challenge. Too few pupils are reaching the higher standards of attainment as a result.
- In reading, pupils are encouraged to read widely and often. The revamped and attractive school library is highly valued by pupils. It has stimulated pupils' interest in reading both fiction and non-fiction books. Effective support is given to pupils who are new to English. They get to grips with the English language quickly, and soon become much better readers.
- The teaching of writing has improved. Teachers seize every opportunity to widen pupils' vocabulary. This is having a positive effect on helping pupils to craft descriptive and imaginative sentences that enliven their written work. For example, pupils painted an effective picture when writing a newspaper report to describe how a superhero made a dramatic entrance into a city. Across the various curriculum subjects, pupils present their written work to a good standard. Their handwriting is neat and clear. Some teaching is less effective in making sure that pupils spell everyday words correctly. Opportunities for pupils to correct careless spelling errors and learn from their mistakes are sometimes overlooked.
- The work in pupils' mathematics books shows that pupils have a good understanding of number. They can calculate accurately using written and, where appropriate, practical resources to aid their understanding. Leaders are now providing pupils with more opportunities to solve problems and to use their mathematical reasoning skills. This is helping pupils to deepen their understanding. This approach, while more commonplace, is not yet fully embedded across the school.
- Teaching assistants make a positive difference in lessons. They work well in tandem with teachers to effectively model learning and to provide practical support to develop pupils' understanding. This support is particularly effective for pupils who are at the early stages of learning English.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Strong pastoral care ensures that pupils are happy, safe and well cared for. Pupils have a strong sense of how to keep safe and report concerns to staff. They say that staff are always there to lend a listening ear. Pupils are well taught about how to be safe online and have a good understanding of the benefits and potential dangers of the internet.
- Bullying or racist incidents are rare. Should they occur, they are promptly recorded, challenged and resolved.
- Pupils understand the different forms of bullying. They say bullying is very rare and they have absolute confidence in adults to resolve it swiftly should it occur. The very large majority of parents agree that bullying is rare and that pupils are well cared for.
- Pupils listen to, and mix well with, one another. They are considerate towards each other's varying viewpoints, different faiths and cultures. They have a mature sense of tolerance and respect. 'We are one, big happy family!' typifies the views of pupils.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' behaviour around the school is calm and results in an orderly and smooth-running school day. Pupils behave well in lessons and show positive attitudes towards their learning. Occasional, low-level disruption from a few pupils is evident, but staff manage this effectively.
- Playtimes and lunchtimes are happy occasions. Pupils of all ages and backgrounds enjoy each other's company, playing sensibly and cooperatively on the playground. The new playground markings are widely enjoyed by pupils to play games with great gusto.
- Pupils who act as 'playground leaders' are great ambassadors in making playtimes active and fun. These pupils enjoy the responsibility of helping to keep everyone active.
- Leaders have worked tirelessly to improve attendance. Many pupils come to school regularly and on time, benefiting from improved teaching. Pupils enjoy school and like the rewards they receive for regular attendance. Despite some recent improvements in attendance, pupils' attendance over time has remained below average.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Improvements made by senior leaders have successfully eradicated a legacy of weak achievement. Since the last inspection, pupils' outcomes have improved. Learning now gets off to a good start in the early years. In key stages 1 and 2, pupils now make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points. Standards of attainment by the end of Year 6 have risen considerably. Pupils are increasingly well prepared for secondary school.

- An above-average proportion of pupils join the school partway through their primary education. Some, especially in key stage 1, join at an early stage of learning to speak English and often with low starting points. These pupils have not been able to benefit fully from all the school has to offer over time, which can impact on the standards of attainment reached in tests and assessments. However, these pupils are well integrated into the school. This, along with effective support, means that they make good progress, particularly in key stage 2. They acquire English skills quickly. Their progress in phonics is good. They learn to decode new words effectively.
- Currently in key stage 1, most pupils are making good progress from their starting points. Even so, some pupils with lower starting points do not catch up fully to reach the expected standards by the end of Year 2. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in Year 1 phonics screening check, for example, is below average. In 2018, at the end of Year 2, although the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics was average, it was below average in reading and writing.
- Most pupils make good progress in key stage 2. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 improved considerably in 2018 and was in line with the national average. The proportion reaching the higher standards in these subjects also improved, but remained below average, especially in reading and mathematics. Strategies to challenge pupils more effectively, especially the most able pupils, to reach the higher standards have been developed but are not yet embedded. In mathematics, for example, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- Pupils are given plenty of real-life opportunities to use and apply their writing and design skills when they undertake work across the various curriculum subjects. For example, pupils wrote persuasive letters to ask leaders for money to create winter gifts to sell at the school Christmas fair. These carefully made gifts have helped to raise vital funds for the school. Pupils present their written work neatly. However, some pupils do not spell everyday words correctly. Leaders are now taking steps to improve the teaching of spelling so that pupils do not continue to make the same spelling mistakes.
- The few pupils with SEND are making good progress. The school keeps a close eye on these pupils and provides effective extra support as required.
- Overall, disadvantaged pupils achieve well. Leaders have overhauled the way in which they use the pupil premium funding to better meet pupils' needs. Leaders and teachers understand the barriers these pupils face, creating bespoke plans to help pupils achieve as well as other pupils. At the end of key stage 2 in 2018, the proportion reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was in line with other pupils nationally. In mathematics, disadvantaged pupils made better progress than other pupils nationally from similar starting points.
- Leaders have had a very positive impact on improving pupils' achievements in reading, writing and mathematics. They are now developing the wider curriculum so that pupils make consistently good progress in subjects beyond English and mathematics.

## Early years provision

Good

- Overseen by the executive headteacher, two teachers work closely and effectively together in the Nursery and Reception class. They ensure that there is a seamless transition between classes so that children are happy and safe and that learning gets off to a good start.
- As a result of effective leadership and good teaching, outcomes have improved rapidly, having been below average in 2017. From varying starting points, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception in 2018 improved significantly to be in line with the national average. Children, including those who are disadvantaged and those who speak English as an additional language, are making good progress.
- Since the previous inspection, the early years has been transformed. Leaders have used funding wisely to create a bright, vibrant and exciting environment. The outdoor area has been enhanced greatly as an extension to the indoor area. Expectations for behaviour are well established. Children behave sensibly and play well alongside each other.
- Activities inspire children to be independent and creative in their learning. For example, children enjoyed the challenge of using their measuring skills to create a range of potions linked to their mathematical and scientific learning. Children also worked well together to use a range of materials to create a life-like robot.
- Teachers prioritise the teaching of communication and language as some children enter the early years with communication and language skills lower than are typically seen for their age. Teachers and adults ensure that the environment is language-rich to improve children's skills. Children, particularly those new to English, develop good skills to catch up, and use their skills to communicate well.
- Parents said that their children are happy, settled and content in the Nursery and Reception class. However, some expressed their wish to become more involved in their children's learning. Records in school show that parents have few opportunities to be involved in their child's learning.
- Staff ensure that all welfare requirements are met. They conduct regular risk assessments to ensure that children are kept safe. Leaders ensure that all legal welfare requirements are met and that safeguarding procedures are in line with the rest of the school.



## School details

Unique reference number	106762
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10052877

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary-aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Kieran Fletcher
Headteacher	Bernadette Nesbit (Executive Headteacher)
Telephone number	01302344678
Website	<a href="http://www.xavier.doncaster.sch.uk">www.xavier.doncaster.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@xavier.doncaster.sch.uk">admin@xavier.doncaster.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	17–18 May 2016

## Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- There have been significant changes to the structure of the school's leadership team since the last inspection. The headteacher was appointed as acting executive headteacher in September 2016. She became the permanent executive headteacher in 2017. A new assistant headteacher with responsibility for teaching and learning was appointed in January 2018. A new school manager was appointed in September 2018.
- Over half of the pupils in the school are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is double the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who have support for SEND is average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is average.
- A larger-than-average proportion of pupils join or leave the school within the school year.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. They carried out some observations jointly with the executive headteacher and assistant headteacher.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of pupils' work and listened to pupils read. An inspector met with a group of pupils to discuss their views and opinions of the school. They observed pupils during the school day, at playtimes and at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors took account of 16 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and parental comments. An inspector spoke with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors spoke to staff and took account of their views through the responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Meetings were held with governors, senior leaders and representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documents. These included the school's review of its own performance, the school's development plan, governing body minutes, external reviews, information about the progress of pupils, behaviour and attendance records and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Brian Stillings, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Gillian Wiles

Ofsted Inspector

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