

Dean Bank Primary and Nursery School

Dean Bank, Ferryhill, County Durham DL17 8PP

Inspection dates

8–9 May 2019

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 headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have been relentless in their drive to improve the quality of education for all pupils since the last inspection.
- Senior leaders have improved the quality of teaching and learning and overall it is now good. Time is needed for these improvements to become fully embedded in all year groups.
- Outcomes are good. Progress in reading, writing and mathematics in almost all year groups is strong. Progress by the end of key stage 2 has improved considerably and is now above average.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged make strong progress from their starting points.
- Governors challenge the school successfully. They hold senior leaders effectively to account for the standard of education all pupils receive.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are polite, courteous and proud of their school. They are respectful towards all adults and each other.
- Personal, social and emotional development is a strength of the school. Leaders and teachers use a well-planned curriculum to promote positive behaviour, mental health and well-being.
- Safeguarding is highly effective. It is a high priority for all. Pupils say that they feel safe and know that all staff would take any concerns they may have seriously.
- Children get off to a good start to learning in the early years. Provision indoors has improved significantly. Opportunities to learn outdoors are more limited.
- New subject leaders receive well-considered and effective support from senior leaders and external partners. Their skills in checking the quality and impact of teaching need development.
- The profile of reading is high. Pupils enjoy reading and do so regularly. Phonics is well taught. Sometimes the books younger pupils read are not well matched to their phonic ability.
- Attendance overall is improving. A small minority of pupils, however, are absent too often. Effective systems are now in place to improve this.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and teachers should further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in key stages 1 and 2 by ensuring that:
 - the strategies introduced to improve the quality of teaching become fully embedded to ensure that progress is consistently strong in all classes
 - younger lower-attaining pupils are provided with reading books that are carefully matched to their phonic knowledge.
- Further improve the quality of provision in the early years by:
 - improving the opportunities children have to learn outdoors
 - ensuring that children’s continual play opportunities are well matched to their abilities.
- Senior leaders should continue to develop the expertise of subject leaders so that they extend and deepen their effectiveness in checking the quality of teaching and pupils’ outcomes in the areas they lead.
- Further improve pupils’ attendance and reduce the number of pupils who miss school too frequently.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the time of the last inspection the headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have been relentless in their drive to improve the quality of education for all pupils. They have created a culture of high ambition which is shared by other leaders and staff in school. Leaders have committed to the professional development of all staff and this has led to improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in almost all classes.
- Senior leaders' evaluations of the school's strengths and areas for further development are accurate. Because of this, actions for continued improvement are focused on the right priorities.
- Recently appointed subject leaders have less precise plans for improvement. They are in the early stages of developing their skills in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and the progress pupils make. Plans for their development are in place.
- The systems for monitoring the progress pupils make, including those who are disadvantaged and those with SEND, are effective and well embedded. Pupils at risk of not making the progress that is expected of them are quickly identified. Appropriate and bespoke intervention and support are swiftly implemented. The leader for assessment is aspirational for all pupils in the setting of suitably ambitious targets.
- Senior leaders are thorough in their monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. Specific areas for improvement are identified, actions are swift and leaders check upon impact regularly. Senior leaders have benefited from the support of local authority officers and external partners. The quality of teaching in most classes has improved because of this.
- Leaders and teachers have established successful partnerships with a number of local schools to agree judgements about pupils' achievements in reading, writing and mathematics. This is improving leaders' subject expertise further, and assessment is accurate as a result.
- The relatively new mathematics leader uses her expert subject knowledge successfully to develop and train other staff. Developing staff expertise in the reasoning aspect of mathematics and the use of correct mathematical vocabulary have been priorities. The impact of this can be seen in pupils' books and when talking to pupils about their learning in mathematics. The leader ensures that her own skills are up to date through regular engagement with other schools in the local mathematics hub. She closely monitors the quality of teaching and learning, and plans for further improvement are well focused.
- The acting deputy headteacher, who is the English leader, is tenacious and ambitious in ensuring that the quality of teaching is the best it can be for all pupils. The newly appointed phonics leader is benefiting from the deputy headteacher's support. As a result, the strategies to improve the consistency of phonics teaching are increasingly embedded.
- Leaders and teachers are aware of pupils' barriers to learning. As a result, pupils who are entitled to additional funding make strong progress. The experienced special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has a detailed knowledge of pupils with SEND

and their families. The most appropriate support for individuals is then planned and put in place. Support plans are precise and actions are detailed. The impact can be seen in pupils' books, during lessons and in the good progress these pupils make.

- Support for newly qualified teachers is effective. Targets are set to develop specific aspects of teaching. There are opportunities to learn from strong, experienced and effective teachers in school and to make visits to see good practice in other schools within the local authority.
- The curriculum has been well planned to support pupils' understanding of other religions and cultures. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 talk with maturity and sensitivity about respecting others' rights to wear the hijab, for example. The promotion of respect and tolerance can be seen throughout the school.
- Parents and carers value the work of staff at the school. One of those who shared their views said, 'Teachers are supportive and it's a friendly, happy place to be. The headteacher has improved the ethos, she's like a breath of fresh air and has dealt with bullying swiftly.'

Governance of the school

- There have been several changes to the governing body since the time of the last inspection. Changes to the way the committees work and are chaired have had a positive impact on the way governors support and challenge senior school leaders.
- Governors have undertaken extensive training to ensure that they have the necessary skills to hold school leaders to account for the school's performance. For example, they ask searching questions to check that the additional funding the school receives is improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.
- Governors attend meetings regularly and make visits during the school day to talk to pupils and see the impact of leaders' actions at first hand.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and areas for development. They share the leaders' ambition that the school continues to improve. They receive valuable information from a range of different leaders. This means that they can challenge differences in pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum.
- Governors understand their safeguarding responsibilities and check that arrangements are effective.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There are robust systems in place to ensure that the school meets all statutory requirements for safeguarding. A strong safeguarding culture exists among all staff and pupils.
- All staff make effective use of the electronic system for recording and monitoring all concerns about pupils. Commentaries are detailed and precise, which means that the most appropriate actions can be swiftly and effectively taken.

- Those with designated responsibility for safeguarding ensure that there is effective support for vulnerable pupils and their families. Leaders frequently engage with a wide number of external agencies. This means that pupils and their families receive expert support linked to their individual needs.
- Staff are well trained and have a clear understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities, including those that relate to extremism and radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and overall it is good.
- In most classes, the quality of teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is consistently good. In a minority of classes, this requires improvement. Where teaching is strongest, staff know pupils exceptionally well and tasks are closely matched to pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Explanations are crisp and clear. Questioning is highly effective. Where pupils are unsure or have not understood, this is quickly resolved.
- Teachers explain the meaning of words clearly, and this helps pupils to apply their knowledge and skills in different subjects. In mathematics, for example, pupils were able to apply their knowledge of adding fractions when subtracting. Pupils used their deep knowledge of measuring when solving complex, multi-step problems. In reading lessons, when retrieving facts, pupils showed that they had a good understanding of the Sun and the solar system. When writing, pupils explained clearly the meaning of parenthesis and showed this in their work.
- Pupils' knowledge of science is building year-on-year. During a discussion with inspectors, pupils explained clearly about how muscles work and that the Amur leopard is an endangered species. However, pupils' ability to work scientifically is yet to be fully developed across all classes.
- Teaching assistants support children effectively when working with small groups and individuals in almost all classes. They give clear explanations and ask questions which help pupils to understand. The support they provide for children with SEND is effective as they reinforce essential vocabulary or help to explain new vocabulary being used in lessons.
- Pupils' engagement in their learning is high in the majority of classes. Relationships between all adults and pupils are exceptionally strong and positive.
- In most classes, pupils take pride over their work and present their work to a high standard. This is particularly so in English and mathematics because teachers' expectations are high. This is more variable in other curriculum subjects, such as science.
- Pupils have many opportunities to review their work and make improvements. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 describe this as a good way to learn and say that it helps them to be resilient.
- Pupils enjoy reading high-quality texts. These have been carefully chosen by teachers and have motivated pupils to read more widely and often. During breakfast club, pupils

enjoyed the extra time to read as it was helping them to develop their fluency and confidence as readers.

- The teaching of phonics has improved since the last inspection and is now more consistent across classes. As a result, more pupils reach the standard expected of them. Lower-attaining pupils in key stage 1, however, do not develop their reading skills as quickly as they should. Sometimes the books they use to practise their reading are not matched closely enough to their phonic knowledge.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. It is a strength of the school.
- Pupils are proud of their school. Leaders ensure that there are many opportunities for pupils to take on a variety of roles and responsibilities. For example, they enjoy being science ambassadors, reading partners and being part of the school council. During discussions with inspectors, pupils talked enthusiastically about the outdoor play and learning initiative they had instigated and the improvements to break times that had followed as a result.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through the well-planned curriculum, assemblies and inputs from visiting speakers. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including when they use the internet. They know, for example, the dangers of sharing personal information when using games online.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about different types of bullying and are adamant that there is no bullying at their school. During discussions with inspectors, they explained that all adults are there to help them, to keep them safe and to take their concerns seriously.
- Effective use of the sport premium funding means that pupils have access to a wide range of sporting activities throughout the school day and at after-school clubs. Leaders have ensured that it is also used to support and promote greater self-esteem, self-confidence and positive mental health and well-being.
- The breakfast club provides a good start to the school day. Pupils enjoy attending and make healthy choices.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well throughout the school day. They have a good understanding of the behaviour systems and are clear about what is expected of them. There is very little disruption to learning, except on the occasions where learning has not been well matched to pupils' needs.
- Pupils are polite and courteous to adults and to each other. All pupils who spoke to inspectors throughout the inspection were respectful and showed a high level of maturity and confidence.

- Leaders have ensured that there are robust systems in place to monitor the attendance of all pupils. Swift action is taken where there are concerns, and attendance is improving as a result. However, attendance for some individuals is still not good enough. Families need considerable support to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes for pupils across the school have improved overall since the last inspection.
- Children currently get off to a good start in the early years. The proportion reaching a good level of development is now broadly in line with the national average. In key stages 1 and 2, most pupils make good progress. In some year groups, this is particularly strong. Progress at the end of key stage 2 has improved considerably in reading and writing, with standards being above, and often significantly above, the national average.
- Disadvantaged pupils across the school make at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In some year groups, this is very marked so that by the end of key stage 2 disadvantaged pupils make progress that is similar to that of other pupils nationally. In 2017, disadvantaged pupils made significantly above-average progress in writing compared to other pupils nationally. In 2018, they made significantly above-average progress in mathematics compared to other pupils nationally.
- Pupils with SEND make strong progress from their starting points. Those who can reach the expected standard in reading, writing or mathematics do so. Effective provision is planned and provided. Pupils are well supported individually, with carefully targeted work.
- Attainment at the end of key stages 1 and 2 is in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment in grammar, punctuation and spelling is above average.
- Leaders' efforts to improve outcomes in reading have been successful. Increasing proportions of pupils in most year groups are reaching the expected and higher standard.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 is now in line with the national average. All pupils who can catch up by Year 2 do so. Sometimes, however, the books that younger lower-attaining pupils use to practise their early reading skills are not well matched to their developing phonic knowledge.

Early years provision

Good

- Children get off to a good start to learning in the early years. Improvements have been particularly rapid since the appointment of the new, highly skilled and knowledgeable early years leader. Changes to the learning environment, the organisation of the provision and staff development have been a priority. Time is now needed for these improvements to be fully embedded. Leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for development and they use this information to focus on the right priorities.

- The majority of children enter the early years with skills, knowledge and understanding below those typical for their age. They make strong progress from different starting points and their learning is closely monitored and tracked. The most appropriate support and intervention to help them succeed are then put in place. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development now reflects the national average.
- Regular, detailed assessments made by staff provide an accurate picture of each child's development. Staff use this information well to plan next learning steps.
- The early years leader provides high-quality training to develop staff skills. Staff now use questioning effectively to help children think more deeply as they play. Most children concentrate well because activities are appropriately pitched for their capabilities. However, there remains a small proportion of children who flit between the activities because they lack sufficient challenge.
- Every opportunity is taken to develop children's language, speaking and social skills. Inspectors saw a group of Nursery children struggling to share plastic tweezers. The teacher modelled how they should ask and share. The children were then encouraged to repeat the sentences to one another. Children playing independently in the sand repeated the language the adults used while planting seeds. They talked happily together about covering the wooden blocks, so that they would grow into pompom flowers.
- Indoors, there is a calm, purposeful learning atmosphere throughout. Resources are well matched to children who are at different stages of development. Opportunities for learning are more limited outdoors, but leaders have plans to develop this further.
- Adults help children to acquire their reading, writing and mathematics skills. Older children, for example, learn to form their letters correctly, count reliably and know the days of the week. This is preparing them well for the next stage of their learning.
- The teaching of phonics is good. Children are using their knowledge of the sounds letters make when they write words.
- Leaders have been successful in using the stay-and-play sessions as an opportunity to let parents see how their children are developing. A parent explained that their child was succeeding because 'the teacher is maximising his learning opportunities'.
- Strong safeguarding and welfare procedures are in place in the early years. Leaders have ensured that specific arrangements are in place, for example in relation to intimate care and toileting procedures.

School details

Unique reference number	114086
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10087526

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

Type of school	Primary and Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	182
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Davison
Headteacher	Pauline Northcott
Telephone number	01740 651512
Website	www.deanbank.durham.sch.uk/
Email address	deanbank@durhamlearning.net
Date of previous inspection	2–3 March 2017

Information about this school

- Dean Bank Primary and Nursery is smaller than the average-size primary school; it has a Nursery for children from the age of two.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- The vast majority of pupils speak English as their first language.
- The school provides a breakfast club every day and a range of after-school activities.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all year groups, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at their work in books. They observed pupils at breakfast club, and at breaktime and lunchtime. The inspectors also listened to pupils read. A number of inspection activities were undertaken alongside the headteacher and the acting deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with pupils, senior and middle leaders, staff, four members of the governing body, including the vice-chair, and a representative from the local authority. A telephone discussion took place with the chair of governors.
- Inspectors considered the 16 responses recorded on Parent View, including eight free-text responses. They also considered the school's own most recent survey of parents. Inspectors spoke to parents informally at the start of the school day and before the class assembly.
- Inspectors examined documents relating to safeguarding arrangements, governance, school improvement planning, self-evaluation, pupils' progress and attainment, attendance, behaviour and the curriculum.
- The 17 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire were considered, as were the 41 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

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