

Toll Bar Primary School

Askern Road, Toll Bar, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN5 0QR

Inspection dates

22–23 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Although improving, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in key stages 1 and 2 is inconsistent.
- Pupils are not sufficiently prepared for their next stages in education because the curriculum does not cover the full range of national curriculum subjects in enough depth.
- Some teachers do not sufficiently meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in lessons. This is because the information teachers receive from leaders regarding pupils' additional needs is too vague.
- Some staff's and pupils' understanding regarding aspects of safeguarding, such as drug trafficking, are underdeveloped.
- The progress pupils make in reading is markedly different from the progress they make in writing and mathematics. Over time, pupils' progress in reading has been poor, particularly that of boys and the most able.
- Although subject leaders monitor the work of teachers and pupils, they sometimes miss significant weaknesses in the school's provision and do not hold staff to account as well as they should.
- Governors do not challenge leaders robustly enough for the recurring and pertinent issues facing the school.
- Leaders' strategies to reduce rates of absence are beginning to bear fruit. However, there is still work to do to ensure that rates of absence are below the national average for a sustained period of time.

The school has the following strengths

- The pastoral care pupils receive is a significant strength of the school. Pupils and their families are supported effectively in a multitude of ways.
- The vast majority of pupils behave very well at school. They are courteous, polite and respectful of each other and their teachers.
- Children make a strong start to school in the early years. Strong early years provision ensures that most children are prepared for their next stage in education.
- The headteacher has created an inclusive ethos and learning culture that are shared by staff and pupils. The school is improving as a consequence.
- The parent support adviser plays an integral role in supporting the most vulnerable pupils. She is well regarded and highly effective in her role.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the reading progress of pupils by ensuring that teachers:
 - assist pupils to apply the letter sounds they have been taught by issuing reading books that closely match the letter–sound correspondences pupils know and can read
 - encourage pupils to reread books to build fluency
 - are given the opportunity to observe effective phonics teaching and attend regular training that improves their understanding of how pupils learn to read
 - ensure that pupils apply phonic knowledge and skills as their first approach to reading and spelling so that they do not look for alternative ways to guess words.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in key stages 1 and 2 so that all pupils, particularly boys, the most able and pupils with SEND, make at least good progress, by ensuring that teachers and teaching assistants:
 - use pupils’ prior assessment information and information relating to pupils’ additional learning needs to plan activities that meet pupils’ needs and abilities effectively
 - do not provide too much support for pupils so that they become overly reliant on it
 - improve their accuracy of assessment so that they have a thorough understanding of the progress pupils are making during the lesson.
- Leaders and governors should ensure that:
 - staff and pupils have a thorough understanding of the risks that pupils may face, particularly linked to drug trafficking
 - all leaders are held to account sufficiently for the recurring and pertinent issues that the school faces, such as pupils’ progress in reading
 - subject leaders are more effective in identifying strengths and weaknesses in their areas
 - the curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced so that pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education
 - inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are eradicated
 - rates of attendance continue to improve and are sustained over a long period of time.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders say that the school's ethos and their vision have been 'reset' recently. Inspectors agree. Since the headteacher's appointment in September 2017, many aspects of the school have improved. Pupils behave well, pastoral support is very strong and the quality of teaching has improved this academic year. However, leadership and management require improvement because some weaker teaching still remains, reading outcomes are poor and subject leadership is not as effective as it should be.
- The most vulnerable pupils with SEND receive far-reaching care and support. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has worked tirelessly for the last 12 months to ensure that the pupils in need of personalised support with their learning receive it swiftly. Leaders and external agencies coordinate support for pupils with SEND appropriately by implementing newly introduced education, health and care (EHC) plans. However, pupils with SEND who have fewer additional learning needs do not always receive the support that they require. This is because the pupil information leaders share with teachers lacks precision. Sometimes, teachers do not have a thorough understanding of pupils' medical conditions, barriers to learning or the strategies that they can use when planning activities to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. The progress pupils with SEND make over time and across subjects is inconsistent.
- The breadth and range of the curriculum does not sufficiently help pupils to acquire knowledge, understanding and skills from a wide range of subjects. Strengths are clearly evident in the creative curriculum. Pupils' artistic and design skills are commendable. Leaders use the expertise of a resident artist to support pupils' understanding and mastery of drawing, painting and sculpture. The school is awash with high-quality examples of pupils' creative work; displays, themed corners and the outdoor provision all contribute to an extremely rich learning environment. Nevertheless, inspection evidence demonstrates that pupils in key stage 2 are not sufficiently prepared for their next stage in education because reading outcomes vary and pupils rarely learn new geographical skills. Teachers do not allocate sufficient 'topic' time to cover the attainment targets for geography as set out in the national curriculum.
- Some subject leaders do not have a sufficiently strong understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their areas. At times, and when reviewing the work of pupils and staff, some subject leaders do not recognise the specific problems that continue to have an adverse effect on pupils' learning. For example, leaders' monitoring activities within humanities have not identified that pupils in key stage 2 have been taught very little geography. Furthermore, some subject leaders are not involved in monitoring, and subsequently evaluating, the provision that they lead. Literacy leaders do not routinely observe staff teach phonics. Consequently, they do not know the extent by which some staff would benefit from additional training to improve their understanding of how pupils learn to read.
- Leaders know that improving pupils' reading is an urgent priority. To this end, leaders have allocated a larger proportion of the school's funding to support pupils' early reading skills. In the early years and key stage 1, children and pupils are encouraged to regularly read new books that are more closely matched to their phonic knowledge.

Leaders have protected further funding so that they can purchase additional reading books for all pupils across key stage 1 by the end of this academic year. Furthermore, since the previous inspection, leaders have developed a school library and classroom reading corners. This is contributing to pupils spending more time in school and at home reading books that develop their curiosity of the world and foster a love of reading at an early age.

- Leaders have an appropriate understanding of the barriers to learning that disadvantaged pupils encounter. Consequently, leaders' use of additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is more effective than it has been previously. The school's own information and scrutiny of disadvantaged pupils' work demonstrate that disadvantaged pupils in the school currently make progress that is similar to that of their peers. However, there is still much work to do to ensure that disadvantaged pupils attain well and make progress that is similar to that of other pupils nationally.
- Senior leaders' documentation relating to school improvement is precise. Leaders' self-evaluation accurately identifies the school's strengths and weaknesses. Accordingly, the school improvement plan includes actions that focus closely on all of the areas requiring development highlighted in leaders' self-evaluation. Leaders and governors regularly assess the effect of their actions on pupils' learning. This enables leaders to make swift changes when a project or initiative is not working as well as it should.
- All of the staff who responded to Ofsted's inspection questionnaire worked at the school at the time of the last inspection. Nearly all staff say that the school has improved since then. Additionally, the vast majority of staff say that leaders use professional development to encourage, challenge and support teachers' improvement.
- Senior leaders, including the headteacher, have high expectations and a steely determination to create a school where pupils 'shine bright and reach high'. The school's ethos and nurturing approach are tangible throughout the school. Pupils often mimic the words and mannerisms of the staff, regularly asking adults if they are having a nice day as they hold open doors or pass each other in the corridor.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is effective. The SMSC curriculum includes topics and themes that are closely related to the demographics of the school. For example, 'Traveller History' week takes place annually. Professional storytellers visit school and lead activities that are designed to help pupils gain a stronger understanding of the history and cultural heritage of the Gypsy/Roma community.

Governance of the school

- Members of the governing body use their wide range of skills and experiences to, as they say, 'support leaders and act as critical friends'. Governors rightly recognise that the role of a governor has changed over time. Consequently, governors take more of an active role in school than they did in the past. School documentation demonstrates that governors frequently visit the school as a group and individually as part of their links to subjects. Governors are eager to immerse themselves in the work of the school so that they have a better understanding of the school's areas of strength and areas to develop further.
- Governors have a firm grasp on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in addition to the vast array of pastoral support the school offers and the effect that this has on pupils and their families.

- Scrutiny of the minutes from governing body meetings demonstrates that governors do not routinely challenge senior leaders regarding the underlying and recurring issues facing the school. For example, governors know that pupils' progress in reading needs to improve. However, the minutes from governing body meetings demonstrate that governors only occasionally hold leaders to account in this regard. Consequently, the actions assigned to leaders, following governing body meetings, rarely focus on reading or pupils' progress.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. They appreciate the many activities, projects and visits that they participate in that relate to safeguarding. Pupils particularly enjoy learning about online safety and anti-bullying. Pupils can identify a trusted adult in school whom they would speak to if something is worrying them. Additionally, pupils say that they are supported effectively by other pupils who act as anti-bullying ambassadors.
- Written records that relate to safeguarding incidents or concerns are made in an appropriate and timely way. They are recorded electronically and shared with staff who need to know that a pupil is suffering, or is at risk of suffering, abuse, neglect or harm.
- Leaders make appropriate pre-recruitment checks to ensure that staff are safe to work with pupils.
- Safeguarding leaders have developed excellent relationships with pupils and their families. They 'meet and greet' families each morning. This ensures that staff are informed of any immediate concerns or worries that a pupil may be experiencing. Pupils are supported very effectively should this be the case.
- Some members of staff do not have an accurate understanding of the dangers pupils may face as a result of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs who groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, and market and seaside towns. Pupils do not learn about this potential risk and so their understanding is underdeveloped.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Although improving, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent across the school and within subjects. Over time, teachers have been unable to improve pupils' progress in reading, in part because learning activities focus too heavily on more complex reading skills and strategies, such as inference, before pupils have mastered the basics of reading, such as decoding and blending.
- Early readers now have more opportunities to read books that closely match their phonic knowledge. However, reading schemes are not fully developed yet. The sequence of books that pupils read does not show a clear progression in phonics knowledge. Pupils receive insufficient opportunities to practise what they have been taught before they move on to a new reading book or 'book band'. Pupils are asked to read aloud books at school and at home that contain words they cannot sound-out so require them to guess at unfamiliar words. Furthermore, sometimes staff encourage pupils to look for alternative ways to guess words by using picture clues, for example.

- Most teachers plan lessons and learning activities that are well matched to pupils' starting points, but some do not. In some lessons, learning activities are too easy or too difficult for some pupils to make strong gains in their learning. The most able pupils, particularly, are often capable of much more. However, some teachers do not assess pupils' understanding accurately during the lesson or after. Consequently, teachers are sometimes unaware that the most able pupils have grasped a concept or learning point and they ask pupils to do more of the same in subsequent lessons.
- Teachers effectively and frequently model high-quality written work. At the start of each topic, pupils demonstrate their learning and understanding by completing a 'cold' piece of extended writing, with limited teacher input. Following focused teaching and regular modelling of what a good piece of writing looks like, pupils are then assessed at the end of the topic by completing a similar 'hot' task. Invariably, pupils' writing is stronger because pupils have acted upon the teacher's modelling. However, a minority of pupils are overly reliant on the teacher's example work and pass off this work as their own. Sometimes, this goes unnoticed by teachers.
- Teaching assistants are effectively deployed across the school. They have developed strong working relationships with teachers, but especially with the pupils that they support. Teaching assistants liaise effectively with teachers so that they know what is expected from them during lessons. In this way, teaching assistants are successful in helping pupils with low prior attainment stay in touch with their learning, present work neatly and overcome misconceptions when they arise.
- Pupils are encouraged to use challenging vocabulary in their written work. Teachers often correct pupils' oral answers to questions, ensuring that pupils use appropriate terms and correct grammar. Scrutiny of pupils' written work demonstrates that pupils respond to teachers' high expectations by using a range of synonyms: words or phrases that mean exactly or nearly the same as another word.
- Pupils develop a wide range of historical skills, knowledge and understanding. Teachers confidently intersperse learning activities linked to history with others that develop further pupils' understanding of literacy. Pupils are adept at using source material to present arguments or opinions because teachers ensure that pupils share ideas sensibly and use evidence carefully.
- Teachers who are new to the profession receive effective guidance and support. They have access to extensive training opportunities. Some newly qualified teachers have attended reading training that successfully developed their confidence in improving pupils' fluency in reading.
- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. This supports teachers' use of group work and 'talking partners'. Pupils enjoy collaboration and working with their peers to improve their own work. Teachers have developed effective classroom routines that ensure that very little learning time is lost when pupils make the transition from group work to written work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to all staff in the school. While every adult makes it their business to support pupils' needs, much of the school's work in this regard is coordinated by a well-informed and experienced parent support adviser (PSA). The PSA has developed strong links with families and external healthcare and social care agencies. This ensures that pupils and their families receive swift support, should they need it, following effective signposting and referrals made by the PSA.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and that, on the odd occasion it does occur, staff resolve any issues quickly. Inspection evidence demonstrates that there are very few incidents of bullying recorded in the last 12 months.
- The small numbers of pupils who attend alternative education provision attend well and make strong progress in their chosen subjects.
- A minority of pupils lack the confidence in lessons to 'go for broke'. These pupils often rely on teaching assistants or teachers to help them complete their work. Sometimes, in their quest to be as supportive as possible, some adults can work harder than the pupils they are supporting in lessons. This does little to build pupils' resilience and character to do well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The vast majority of pupils behave well throughout the day. They move around the school quietly and play sensibly during social times. Most pupils concentrate for prolonged periods of time during lessons. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive, supported effectively by a competitive rewards system. Pupils are determined to earn the most points each week so that they are presented with the 'best seat in the house' – the opportunity to sit on a sofa at the front of the hall – during weekly assemblies.
- The proportion of pupils who are excluded for a fixed period has been quite high for the past few years. However, improvements recently in pupils' behaviour and stronger teaching this academic year have led to the proportion of pupils who are excluded reducing significantly. So far this year, nine school days have been lost to fixed-period exclusions.
- Published attendance figures for the school suggest that rates of absence and persistent absence are considerably higher than the national average. However, a larger than average number of pupils join and leave the school at times other than the usual admission date. Pupils who leave remain on Toll Bar's registers until they take up their place in their new school. In some instances, it can take up to two weeks for pupils to be transferred. During this time, pupils are marked as absent on Toll Bar's registers, thus negatively impacting on overall rates of absence. Furthermore, a large proportion of pupils travel for extended periods of time and this has a detrimental effect on rates of persistent absence. Inspection evidence highlights that when this is taken into consideration, rates of absence are declining and persistent absence is below the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' reading progress across key stage 2 in 2017 and 2018 was well below that achieved by other pupils, placing the school in the bottom 10% of schools nationally. Furthermore, during the same period, the proportion of Year 6 pupils who achieved the standard expected for their age in reading assessments at the end of key stage 2 was well below the national average. No pupils achieved the higher standard.
- The progress current pupils are making is improving. However, inconsistent teaching in key stages 1 and 2, and learning activities that do not meet the needs of all pupils, is leading to some pupils making less progress than they are capable of in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There exists a substantial difference between the progress boys and girls make over time and currently. While boys generally enter the school with levels of development that are below those of girls, this contrast remains as pupils grow older, particularly in reading across key stage 1.
- Leaders have developed excellent relationships with the families of pupils who are absent from school for prolonged periods of time while travelling. Pupils are provided with resource packs to stay in touch with their learning. However, there is currently no consistent strategy to check how successful this approach is at bridging the learning gap between pupils leaving and returning to school.
- Provision for pupils with SEND supports pupils' development both socially and emotionally because of the effective care and guidance that these pupils receive. However, inconsistent teaching means that some pupils with SEND make more progress than others. Progress is stronger when teachers take account of pupils' additional needs and starting points.
- Teachers' insistence that pupils use challenging vocabulary is contributing to improved spelling accuracy across the school. Pupils' English grammar, punctuation and spelling (EGPS) outcomes in EGPS assessments at the end of key stage 2 are improving.
- Strong early years provision and an earlier focus on teaching phonics are contributing to a larger proportion of pupils in Year 1 passing the phonics screening check. In 2017 and 2018, the proportion of pupils passing the check was just below the national average.
- Disadvantaged pupils' results in the reading and writing assessments at the end of key stage 1 in 2018 were in line with those achieved by other pupils nationally. Disadvantaged pupils' mathematics results were above the national average. These results represent strong gains in disadvantaged pupils' learning.

Early years provision

Good

- Many children enter Nursery and Reception with skills that are below those typical for their age. Strong leadership, targeted support and effective teaching all contribute to children getting off to a good start in the early years. More than two thirds of children regularly leave Reception having reached a good level of development.
- Transition arrangements are thorough. Staff make visits to children's homes before they start early years provision. Over time, children gradually increase the number of

hours that they spend in school. Children's confidence develops swiftly because staff are caring, considerate and genuinely interested in helping children to thrive.

- Staff assess children's development regularly. Recent assessments highlight that many children require specific intervention or support to develop their communication and language, in addition to their personal, social and emotional development. Consequently, teachers modify learning activities or direct children to different play corners so that they receive additional support in the areas of learning they need to develop the most.
- The early years leader ensures that children see and hear adults speak to each other in the way she would want the children to speak themselves. This, in addition to daily phonics teaching, ensures that children can confidently repeat the sounds they hear. Many children can link sounds to letters and accurately read words or simple sentences by the time they leave Reception. The children who need additional practise to make sure that they can recognise sounds and blend with confidence and accuracy are supported well by teachers. This is helping to ensure that these children do not fall too far behind their peers.
- Children are asked to read aloud in Reception every day. When a child mispronounces a word or sound, most staff are quick to intervene by constructively and positively modelling the correct sound so that children's confidence is not dented. Reading with parents and carers is promoted by the introduction of 'book and a bun' sessions each morning, where parents can come into school to eat breakfast with their child while reading to each other.
- The early years leader provides effective direction. She has an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the provision. Consequently, the training that the early years leader and other senior leaders provide to staff is aimed precisely at the areas of provision that require further development. Staff have recently attended training to improve children's mathematics mastery. However, staff say that they would benefit from additional phonics training, as it has been some time since they refreshed their understanding of how children learn to read.
- All legal welfare requirements are met in the early years. Staff are regularly trained and have a thorough understanding of safeguarding issues and policies.
- The vibrant indoor and outdoor spaces ensure that children have a multitude of options when it comes to free play. Staff ensure that most spaces are learning spaces. For example, while children paint, staff provide guidance or ask questions linked to the activity. Staff have developed effective routines. Children are able to organise materials and tidy away independently and without fuss.
- Children's attendance in Nursery and Reception is variable. Some children are already falling behind their peers in their levels of development.

School details

Unique reference number	106677
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10081097

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Robinson
Headteacher	Stephen Bower
Telephone number	01302 874324
Website	www.tollbar.doncaster.sch.uk
Email address	admin@tollbar.doncaster.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 July 2018

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- A larger than average proportion of pupils join the school at times other than the usual admission date. At the time of the inspection, approximately 20% of current pupils had joined the school after Reception or following long periods out of education.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium is much higher than the national average.
- One in four pupils are classed as belonging to a minority ethnic group. The vast majority of these pupils are of Gypsy/Roma heritage.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is much higher than the national average.
- Children attend full- and part-time early years provision in the Nursery and Reception.
- A very small number of pupils attend a pupil referral unit (PRU) that is the responsibility of the local authority.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes across the school, observing teachers more than once in some instances. Many of the observations in lessons were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, the SENCo, subject leaders and members of the governing body, including the chair, and the lead inspector met with representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work during lessons and with senior leaders in mathematics and English. In addition, an inspector scrutinised a large sample of learning journals belonging to children in Nursery and Reception.
- An inspector spoke on the telephone with a member of staff from the PRU.
- Inspectors held informal and formal discussions with many pupils and observed interactions during social times.
- Inspectors listened to three groups of pupils read and observed staff listening to pupils read.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and scrutinised a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation, analysis of performance information, action plans and evaluations, attendance records, safeguarding files, recruitment checks, headteacher reports and minutes of governors' meetings.
- Inspectors took account of one qualifying complaint made in advance of the inspection. The complaint raised possible concerns about the wider issues concerning the quality of the leadership and management of the school and of the contribution made by the school to the well-being of pupils.
- Inspectors took into account the 27 responses from parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Inspectors also considered the responses from the 20 members of staff and one pupil who completed Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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