

Inspection of Hexthorpe Primary School

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

Inspection dates: 29–30 January 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils told us they feel safe and happy in school. They move around school calmly and confidently. Behaviour has improved since the last inspection. When pupils' behaviour is not good, adults support pupils in making the right choice. Pupils say bullying does happen but adults deal with this well. Pupils with complex issues have their needs met well.

In the early years, children have a good start to learning. Well-planned activities help them learn well. Children have good relationships with adults and other children.

Adults teach reading well in Reception and key stage 1. Senior leaders have ensured that learning to read is a priority for younger pupils. Reading is not well taught in key stage 2. This limits some pupils' ability to become successful readers.

Senior leaders are reviewing the curriculum. They know they need to ensure that what pupils learn will help with what they learn next. Currently, pupils do not regularly revisit learning so that it is firmly embedded in their long-term memory. Senior leaders have established that some teachers are not checking pupils' understanding effectively. They do not use this information well enough to plan the next steps.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Senior leaders and governors understand the school's strengths and areas to improve well. They are aspirational about the education they wish to provide for pupils at Hexthorpe Primary School. They know that improvement has not been rapid enough. The transition management board has recently been strengthened. Members are beginning to make the necessary improvements to realise the school's vision.

The pastoral team notices and addresses pupils' concerns urgently. Members tackle issues in attendance with diligence. Consequently, pupils' attendance is improving. The school has strong links with the local community.

Pupils are tolerant and respectful of each other. Their excellent social skills are seen when they work together. Pupils understand other cultures and backgrounds. For example, in Reception, children made Chinese lanterns to celebrate Chinese New Year. Through debating, pupils are able to voice their opinions and justify these. The school encourages pupils' voice through an active school council. There is a very positive environment for learning at Hexthorpe Primary School.

The curriculum planning and delivery are secure in some, but not all, areas of the curriculum. This enables pupils to achieve as they should. In science, teaching places the use of scientific vocabulary, content and skills at the centre of learning. As

a result, pupils are exposed to appropriate scientific knowledge and conceptual understanding.

In some subjects, this is not the case. This is because teachers have not ensured that pupils' knowledge is secure before setting new tasks. In mathematics, for example, some teachers do not assess well enough. This means they do not check for any gaps in pupils' knowledge before moving on to the next task. In geography, pupils do not have a clear understanding of some of the skills and vocabulary used in current teaching.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the support they need from staff. The school is highly inclusive. Pupils with complex emotional needs have them met well. This is helping these pupils to achieve as well as their peers.

In the early years, children learn well. This is because highly competent staff provide children with the right experiences. This enables them to learn new skills and knowledge. In phonics, well-trained staff are clear about the sounds and words children need to know at each stage. On the whole, books are well matched to the sounds children know. The richly resourced learning areas help children to be inquisitive in their learning. Children play together, share their learning with each other and hold conversations confidently.

Senior leaders recognise that, due to staffing instability, some middle leaders need further support. This has affected pupils' learning and progress. A programme of training to enable these middle leaders to improve their craft is now in place.

While children learn to read well in the early years, not enough pupils reach the expected standard by the end of Year 6. Pupils in upper key stages who need to catch up rapidly are not provided with a consistent approach to become fluent in reading. Pupils are provided with too few opportunities to foster a love of reading. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to read for pleasure.

Staff say that they feel valued in their roles. Leaders are considerate of their well-being and workload. Staff enjoy opportunities to work together and model teaching in each other's classes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff at all levels take safeguarding seriously. Record-keeping is thorough. The pastoral team has an effective relationship with external agencies. Members are quick to act on issues and offer guidance and support. All staff have a clear understanding of their roles. Staff are very watchful and quick to step in if they notice something is not right. They receive regular training and up-to-date information. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in and out of school. They know what to do if something is not right.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Senior leaders have not ensured that curriculum plans are coherently planned and sequenced in all subjects. This means that pupils are not secure in what they need to know and remember. This weaker planning is often a direct result of teachers not checking precisely the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Therefore, the content of the curriculum is not accurately addressing needs. Leaders should focus on making sure that teachers use assessment information appropriately so that pupils are learning more and remembering more. Leaders must also make sure that plans are carefully and logically sequenced so that teaching supports pupils in building on previous learning.
- Leaders have not made reading a priority for pupils in key stage 2. Pupils who need help to become fluent readers are not getting appropriate support. This has hindered too many older pupils from becoming successful readers. Staff must plan the reading curriculum so that it better meets the needs of these pupils. Leaders should foster a love of reading by developing a structured and consistent approach, both formally and informally, to encourage and enable pupils to become successful fluent readers.
- Some curriculum leaders and teachers are not as skilled as others at ensuring that the curriculum is delivered effectively. This has meant that some areas of the curriculum are not adequately monitored and pupils' progress in these subjects is slow. Leaders need to ensure that the programme of professional development for teachers and curriculum leaders continues so that the school's vision for its high-quality curriculum can be realised.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	143194
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10121727
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	472
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Kim Gray
Headteacher	Nicola Parker-Watts
Website	www.hexthorpe.doncaster.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	15–16 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Hexthorpe Primary School is part of the Astrea Academy Trust.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The number of pupils joining and leaving the school at different times during the school year is higher than that of other schools nationally.
- The trust has put in place a transition management board to enable rapid improvements.
- The school offers a breakfast club and several after-school clubs.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the headteacher, those responsible for governance and several senior and middle leaders, including leaders for safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, and the curriculum. We also met with teachers. We held a telephone conversation with the chief executive officer of the trust.

- We visited lessons, spoke to pupils and staff, and looked at work across the curriculum.
- We looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation document and behaviour, bullying and attendance information. We carefully scrutinised exclusion rates. We looked at plans for pupils with additional needs.
- We scrutinised the school's records on safeguarding. We talked to staff about their roles in keeping pupils safe to check their understanding of policies and practices. We also spoke to pupils about feeling safe.
- We observed pupils' behaviour during learning, breaktime and lunchtime. We also observed how they conduct themselves throughout the school day.
- We took account of the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires for parents and carers, staff and pupils. We spoke to some parents on the playground at the start of the school day.
- We looked in depth at reading, science, mathematics and geography. We also looked at writing across aspects of the curriculum. We visited lessons, spoke with pupils and teachers, and scrutinised pupils' work.

Inspection team

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