

# Inspection of Pontefract De Lacy Primary School

Chequerfield Lane, Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF8 2TG

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Inspection dates: 30–31 January 2020

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Early years provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The school has been through an unsettled period. Following the previous inspection, standards were low throughout the school and across subjects. High expectations from new leaders and staff are now resulting in more positive signs of improvement in pupils' outcomes.

Too many pupils in key stages 1 and 2, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are behind with reading. New approaches are helping. However, early reading remains an urgent priority for leaders to fully address.

Pupils understand the behaviour system and feel it is applied fairly. They say the school now feels calm and safe because behaviour has improved. Pupils know that when bullying happens, an adult will listen and follow up their concerns. Pupils behave well overall. They are respectful of one another and can often be seen spontaneously encouraging each other's efforts. Some pupils find it difficult to manage their emotions. They are well supported by the school's inclusive and nurturing approach.

Pupils enjoy the range of experiences staff provide. Recent examples include a visit to Eden Camp and children in the early years learning about Chinese New Year. Pupils are keen to be involved in the life of the school. School council representatives are currently working on providing new play equipment to improve breaktimes.

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

There was a prolonged period of staffing and leadership upheaval following the previous inspection. New leaders are starting to secure the necessary improvements. In 2019, leaders' actions resulted in a sharp increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards by the end of key stage 2, particularly in writing and mathematics.

Leaders have introduced a newly designed curriculum. Its aim is to broaden pupils' horizons and give them the knowledge they need for their life ahead. In some subjects, such as mathematics and science, the curriculum is further developed. In these subjects, pupils are becoming more secure in their learning. However, a legacy of poor teaching in the past means that pupils have gaps in their learning in some subjects. Pupils who are behind, including those with SEND, sometimes complete work of poor quality. They have not secured the basics well enough. For example, they are unable to write with appropriate letter formation or make use of finger spaces. In these cases, teachers have not made sure that gaps in pupils' knowledge from previous year groups have been addressed. Many subject leaders are new to their roles. They are being supported to check the effectiveness of the curriculum

and how well pupils are remembering important knowledge. However, this is at an early stage.

Too many pupils enter key stage 2 without being able to read fluently. This hinders them from being able to access their learning in other subjects. New leaders have prioritised reading. They have introduced a reading strategy which makes sure that pupils read a variety of texts at different points throughout the school day. Pupils are showing more interest in reading. They say they enjoy the books that teachers read to them. Leaders have chosen these books carefully as the basis of the English curriculum. They provide pupils with exposure to a broad range of high-quality texts.

The teaching of early reading, including phonics, has only seen more recent signs of improvement. A new programme has been introduced and early years and key stage 1 staff have been trained. Pupils read books which are usually well matched to the sounds they know. The early signs are encouraging. In Reception, the new phonics approach is becoming quickly embedded. Children are keeping up with the expectations of the programme. However, there are too many pupils in key stages 1 and 2, including those with SEND, who began their current year group well behind what is expected for their age. These pupils are now receiving much improved phonics teaching, but many of them have a lot of catching up to do. The extra support for struggling readers is not frequent enough or precisely targeted to help these pupils catch up quickly.

Children in the early years enter the classrooms happily each morning. Staff have built very positive relationships with children and have established important routines which support children's learning and development.

Leaders have made important improvements in pupils' behaviour and attendance. Fixed-term exclusions are reducing. This has been achieved through more accurately identifying pupils' needs so that they receive the right support. The nurture room and sensory room provide pupils with safe places where they can learn to manage their emotions effectively.

Most parents are satisfied with the school. They recognise the improvements which leaders are making. However, some parents have concerns about their children's education. There is further work to do in building positive relationships with these parents.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive training which is effective in helping them to recognise possible signs of concern. Leaders follow up concerns diligently and communicate with external agencies effectively.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils learn about how to be safe when crossing the road and when they use the internet. Assemblies, for

example, provided by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), make sure that the curriculum addresses issues which are pertinent to the pupils in this area.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Some aspects of the new phonics programme are not yet in place in key stages 1 and 2 and need urgent attention. For example, many pupils who need to rapidly catch up are not getting the right support. Staff in key stage 2 have not been trained in the school's phonics approach. This means that too many pupils who have fallen behind with reading are not learning to read with fluency and understanding as soon as they should. Leaders need to fully implement the new programme and check that it is having the desired effect. They must ensure there is a rigorous system for supporting pupils, including those with SEND, who urgently need to catch up so they receive effective practice and targeted support.
- Subject leadership is in the early stages of development in many subjects. Senior leaders should continue to support new subject leaders so that they are able to check that their subject is being implemented consistently well throughout each key stage. They should make sure that gaps in pupils' learning are being addressed and that staff have the necessary expertise to deliver the subjects they teach.
- Absence and persistent absence have reduced considerably this year. However, the learning and progress of pupils with SEND continues to be affected by their absence. Leaders should make sure absence decreases further for this group of pupils so they are not disadvantaged by poor attendance.
- Some parents have mixed views about the school. For example, they are not sure how their children are being supported with aspects of learning which they are struggling with. Leaders should consider the views of the small number of concerned parents so they can build more positive relationships with these families.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140023
<b>Local authority</b>	Wakefield
<b>Inspection number</b>	10088954
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	348
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Phil Jones
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gemma Smith
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.delacy.patrust.org.uk">www.delacy.patrust.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21–22 April 2015

## Information about this school

- There has been considerable turbulence in the school's staffing and leadership arrangements since the last inspection. The headteacher took up post in June 2019. The two assistant headteachers began their positions during the 2018/19 school year. The trust primary director was the interim headteacher in the absence of a headteacher, before the new headteacher's appointment. He is currently providing leadership support for the school during this period of transition in the school's leadership.
- The school is part of the Pontefract Academies Trust. A new chief executive officer (CEO) was appointed to the multi-academy trust in March 2018. There have also been several changes in the trust's directors. The school operates a local governing body called the school performance review board.
- The school runs a breakfast club.

## Information about this inspection

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

- We held meetings with the headteacher, primary director, senior leaders and subject leaders. Meetings also took place with three trustees, including the CEO,

and two representatives of the school performance review board, including the chair.

- We carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, science and design technology. These subjects were considered closely to evaluate the quality of education. In each of these subjects, inspection activities included: lesson visits; discussions with staff and pupils; meetings with subject leaders; and work scrutiny. The lead inspector also listened to pupils read.
- A range of documentation was considered. This included the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement.
- Inspectors spoke to parents informally at the start of the school day and one inspector made a visit to the breakfast club.
- Many of the inspection activities gave inspectors the opportunity to evaluate the culture of safeguarding in the school. Additionally, we asked staff about the impact of the safeguarding training they have received. Child protection records and the single central record of checks on the suitability of staff to work with children were also scrutinised.

### **Inspection team**

Kirsty Godfrey, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

James Kilner

Ofsted Inspector

Mary Lanovy-Taylor

Ofsted Inspector

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