

Inspection of Dobcroft Infant School

Pingle Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S7 2LN

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 December 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected since May 2007.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend Dobcroft Infant School. They are happy and value the rich and varied experiences that leaders have planned for them. Parents recognise the school as welcoming and inclusive. Behaviour is exceptional. Pupils said that bullying is rare, but if it happens teachers deal with it quickly. Pupils enjoy learning and focus well in lessons. Pupils are thoughtful and kind to each other. They are encouraged to see themselves as citizens of a wider world. They take part in challenges and join clubs to identify sustainable ways to travel to school or save the planet through recycling.

Leaders and all staff are highly ambitious for the school. They actively seek ways to improve it. Senior leaders involve the school in interesting projects, such as Unicef's Rights Respecting Schools. These projects are used to ensure that pupils have a voice, share ideas and opinions, and develop their own talents. Pupils have opportunities to discuss their thoughts about things happening in school or in the world, such as the recent COP26 summit. They are confident and enjoy sharing their ideas.

Leaders and teachers share a passion for making sure that pupils have exciting learning opportunities. They said that they want to ensure that 'the whole child is developed'. They have extended their curriculum in some subjects to do this. Examples include Year 1 pupils having swimming lessons and Year 2 pupils learning to play the violin.

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

The experienced senior leaders have focused on developing a curriculum that is inspiring and exciting. The plans show what pupils need to learn at different stages of the school. Some subject plans are more detailed than others. In subjects such as mathematics, there is clear progression in learning. Teachers use this well to plan lessons that help pupils to know and understand more. However, in a small number of other subjects, leaders need to map out the crucial knowledge that they want pupils to remember. This will then help teachers to assess learning more effectively and plan future lessons which build on what pupils know.

Leaders are passionate about developing a love of reading. They have selected a core of ambitious texts for pupils to read while at the school. Year 2 pupils were enthralled by 'Oliver Twist' and talked with enthusiasm about a range of other books they had read in Year 1. Pupils are encouraged to read regularly. They take story books home, to share with parents, as well as their phonically decodable texts, to practise reading skills. Some pupils attend Early Birds Reading Club to develop greater confidence and fluency by reading to adults regularly.

Leaders have ensured that early reading teaching is effective. They have made small changes to the chosen approach to teaching phonics. Staff have attended recent

training and use this well to make sure that pupils develop strong phonics skills. Any pupils finding reading difficult are quickly identified and given extra support.

Mathematics is a strength of the school. Leaders have developed a curriculum which supports teachers to plan lessons that engage and interest pupils. There is a clear progression in learning across the school. Pupils are actively encouraged to develop a positive attitude to mathematics from the very start of each lesson, through the 'maths song'. Many said that mathematics is their favourite subject.

Children in the early years get an exceptional start to their education. They are welcomed into foundation stage from a wide variety of different settings. They settle quickly due to the caring and inspiring staff. The curriculum is ambitious and well planned. Staff are highly skilled and adapt learning to meet individual needs. Talk and vocabulary development is at the heart of everything they do. This results in highly articulate children who are independent and keen to explain learning and ideas.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported in this school. Teachers skilfully adapt learning to support pupils, in line with individual learning targets. Support from outside agencies is used effectively to ensure that staff are well trained. Teachers provide an environment that helps these pupils to achieve well.

The work that the school does to promote the personal development of pupils is exceptional. Parents value the focus leaders have put on developing pupils' self-confidence and resilience. Leaders provide well-planned activities and experiences. Pupils talked with enthusiasm about being healthy mind champions, helping others with problems or worries, and being playground leaders and e-cadets.

Senior leaders are inspiring role models for staff. They support the staff well, and staff said that they are considerate. Staff are proud to be part of the school team. Governors are involved and well informed. They visit the school regularly. There is a positive attitude to the introduction of new approaches to improve the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders see pupils' welfare and safety as the most important aspect of the school's work. They have ensured that there are effective systems in place for all staff to report any concerns. Leaders act swiftly to follow up any issues, and utilise outside agencies when appropriate, for further support. Staff are well trained and knowledgeable about risks in the local area and also in the wider world.

All pupils are taught about safety through assemblies, experiences or the curriculum. An example of this is learning about 'Modeshift', where pupils were taught about road safety as they learned about more sustainable forms of transport to school.

Leaders have made sure that all stakeholders are aware of the impact of COVID-19 on pupils' mental health. They are working with mental health practitioners to provide support for pupils and families when needed.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum, in some subjects, is not sufficiently detailed to ensure that learning is progressively sequenced. However, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about. For this reason, the transition arrangements have been applied. Whole-school plans, in some subjects, do not have sufficient detail to give teachers the support they need to plan lessons progressively. This means that pupils do not build on prior knowledge and cannot always recall learning. Senior leaders should ensure that all middle leaders have sufficient curriculum understanding to identify the key knowledge to be taught in each subject.
- Assessment does not accurately identify what pupils know and remember in some subjects. This means that teachers do not fully know what pupils have or have not remembered over time. Leaders should ensure that assessment systems reflect the knowledge taught in the curriculum, and that teachers use this information to plan, adapt or extend learning.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	107048
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10199424
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	308
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Gates
Headteacher	Cathy Rowland
Website	www.dobcroft-inf.sheffield.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	15 and 16 May 2007

Information about this school

- Dobcroft Infant School is an above-average-sized infant school.
- The school is located in one of the least disadvantaged parts of the country. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well below average.
- The executive headteacher is a national leader of education.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is slightly above average.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other leaders, as well as staff and pupils. A meeting was also held with a group of governors and the Learn Sheffield adviser who is currently working with the school. Responses to Ofsted’s staff survey were also considered.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour in lessons and around school, including at break and lunchtimes. Pupils’ views were gathered through formal and informal discussions.
- Inspectors did deep dives in reading, mathematics, history and religious education. Further planning was scrutinised in geography, science, computing and personal, social and health education. Discussions were held with middle leaders to discuss the planning, coherence and detail of the curriculum. Inspectors visited lessons, viewed pupils’ work and met with teachers. Inspectors discussed learning with pupils and listened to them read.
- School policies and records around safeguarding were checked.
- The views of parents were gathered through informal discussions in the playground, and through analysis of information gathered from the 98 responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online survey, together with 86 free-text comments. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

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