

Inspection of Hexthorpe Primary School

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

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 September 2023

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

The principal of this school is Jeni Harrison. This school is part of Astrea Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Rowena Hackwood, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ben Brown. There is also a Regional Director, Asma Maqsood-Shah who is responsible for this school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Hexthorpe Primary School is a happy and welcoming school. Staff know all pupils and families individually. Positive relationships between staff, pupils, parents and carers ensure everyone is valued and included. Pupils thrive in the family atmosphere of this nurturing school.

The school sets high expectations for pupils learning. Staff want all pupils to do well. Pupils enjoy their learning. They know how the knowledge they learn in different subjects will help them in everyday life.

Pupils behave well. They move around the building sensibly and safely. Pupils enjoy each other's company at breakfast club. Adults support pupils to play together at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Pupils are safe in school. Bullying is rare. If it does happen, adults deal with it swiftly and fairly. Pupils show respect and are accepting of others' differences. One pupil said, 'We are all equal and we have the same respect for everyone.'

Staff provide high levels of support for pupils and parents. Parents welcome and appreciate this level of care. Staff are knowledgeable about the local community. The pastoral team helps families to access local services. Parents speak to the pastoral team willingly and happily.

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

The curriculum has undergone significant changes since the last inspection. The school has prioritised mathematics and reading from the early years to Year 6. In science, and subjects such as history and art, the school has identified the important knowledge that they want pupils to learn. Many pupils speak English as an additional language. The curriculum focuses on developing pupils' language and oracy skills. In key stage 1 and 2, teachers model and repeat language to develop pupils' understanding. The school has carefully identified the vocabulary that pupils will learn in each subject.

The quality of education that pupils receive is not reflected in the outcomes achieved by pupils in Year 6 in 2022. These pupils experienced disruption to their learning during the pandemic. They have had less time to benefit from the improvements that the school has made to the curriculum.

Staff use clear procedures to identify and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND have plans with individual targets that set out what they are expected to achieve each term. These targets are reviewed regularly. However, for some pupils the targets are not precisely related to their learning.

There is a consistent approach to teaching phonics and reading from the early years to Year 6. Staff are well trained. They implement the agreed phonics programme

with fidelity and precision. Adults check pupils' phonic knowledge regularly and ensure that extra support is given to any pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Pupils practise reading with carefully selected books that match the sounds that they have learned. This helps pupils to read with increasing accuracy, fluency and confidence. Pupils enjoy listening to teachers read to them. Leaders have intentionally chosen books to share which reflect the diverse community in which pupils live. The school library is an inviting and welcoming reading environment, where pupils can choose reading books to share at home. Pupils welcome the variety of books that they have on offer.

In the early years, children play well together and talk confidently to adults about their learning. The school recognises that the early years curriculum needs further development. The school has not given staff enough guidance on how to develop and extend children's knowledge and vocabulary across the early years curriculum. Learning activities do not provide children with the opportunity to build a secure foundation for later learning. Children are not prepared as well as they should be for Year 1.

The 'green light' behaviour system is clear and understood by all pupils and staff. Pupils know that they will be rewarded for behaving well. The behaviour of a small number of pupils does not meet the high expectations of the school. Adults are well trained to support these pupils. There are detailed systems in place to record and track behaviour incidents. Leaders engage with families to manage attendance well. The school has a strong bank of resources to ensure that pupils and families get the help that they need quickly.

There is a well-planned programme for pupils' personal development. Pupils take on leadership roles, such as school councillors, junior leaders and mini police with pride. These roles help to promote pupils' confidence and sense of responsibility. Pupils enjoy the choice of extra-curricular clubs on offer.

The school has made significant improvement since the last inspection. Leaders, including trust leaders, have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be better. They have a clear strategy to ensure that the school continues to move forward. Leaders respond positively to staff needs. They ensure that training and support is robust. Staff describe the school as 'like a family'. They take pride in working together to meet the needs of their diverse community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils with SEND do not have precise learning targets in their individual education plans. This means that staff are not aware of the small steps needed

for these pupils to make progress in their learning. The school needs to ensure that the targets for all pupils with SEND are precise and matched to their learning needs.

- Learning activities in the early years do not focus clearly on the development of key knowledge and vocabulary. Adult-led activities are too complex for many children. This means that children cannot access the intended learning outcomes. The school should ensure that the early years curriculum identifies the key knowledge and vocabulary that children need to be ready for year 1, including how this will be delivered within the setting.
- In the early years, adults do not model the language or vocabulary that they want children to learn consistently. Adults miss opportunities to check whether children have acquired the vocabulary that they need to communicate effectively. The school should ensure that staff have the training and expertise to provide meaningful opportunities to practise talking and communicating across all seven areas of 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.

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	143194
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10290313
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	429
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ben Brown
Principal	Jeni Harrison
Website	www.astreahexthorpe.org
Date of previous inspection	24 June 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The principal is new to the role since the last routine inspection. A vice principal, who is also the maths leader, and an assistant principal have also been appointed.
- The school is part of Astrea Academy Trust.
- The school does not use alternative provision providers.
- 69% of pupils in the school speak English as an additional language.
- There is a breakfast club run by the school on site.
- The school has a nursery for three and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, the chief executive officer, the regional director, the designated safeguarding lead and the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors met representatives from the board of trustees and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science, history and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector heard pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school, at playtime and at lunchtime. The inspector spoke with pupils about their views of the school and their learning, behaviour and safety.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and pupils and Ofsted's online survey for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View, including comments received via the free-text facility. The inspector also talked to parents in the school playground.

Inspection team

Nicola Beaumont, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Michael Rowland	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Collier	Ofsted Inspector
Judy Shaw	Ofsted Inspector

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