

Inspection of Balby Central Primary Academy

Littlemoor Lane, Balby, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN4 0LL

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 January 2024

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

The headteacher of this school is Emma Cooke. The school is part of The Rose Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Helen Harrison, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Peter Steadman.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are challenged to do their very best. Across the school there are high aspirations for all pupils. Pupils are happy and feel safe. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive.

Pupils' outcomes in national assessments are below average. However, the school is taking effective action to improve and provide a broad, ambitious curriculum for all pupils. The impact of these changes is most evident in early reading and mathematics.

Pupils strive to meet the school values of being ready, respectful and safe. They demonstrate these values in lessons and at breaktimes. Behaviour is calm and orderly. Pupils are polite and respectful to each other. The school rewards pupils for working well. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities within school. Members of the pupil 'safe squad' lead assemblies on staying safe and support their peers on the playground. Pupils know how to stay safe online.

There are lots of opportunities to develop interests. For example, some pupils are part of a trust choir. In recognition of their high standards, they were chosen to sing nationally at the Royal Albert Hall. To contribute to their local community, pupils take part in the annual family picnic and sing in the local care home.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests. There are a variety of clubs such as crochet and martial arts club. Pupils enjoy taking part in residential visits. The school offers a range of opportunities including a parliamentary visit to London. In Year 4, pupils learn to work as a team, making campfires and building dens.

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

Leaders have implemented a well-designed curriculum. School and trust leaders have provided training to help curriculum leaders develop their subjects well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same curriculum as their peers. Teachers provide adaptations in lessons, such as specialist equipment and additional support, to help pupils meet their individual targets.

In lessons such as design technology, pupils work purposefully. They remember the special vocabulary they have been taught, for example, 'fixed' and 'rotating axles'. Changes to the science curriculum, in addition to some well-planned teacher training, have helped to ensure pupils develop their scientific knowledge, practice what they have learned and use the scientific vocabulary they hear across a range of subjects and activities. However, in a small number of other subjects, the learning activities which teachers choose do not help pupils to gain the knowledge they need for later learning.

The school has developed a consistent approach to the teaching of early reading. All adults follow the school's phonics programme well. Pupils read books that contain the sounds that they know. Pupils who need to catch up in reading have regular individual phonics teaching. The vast majority of pupils are able to read fluently by the end of Year 2. Leaders celebrate reading in many ways across the school. Pupils enjoy listening to their teacher read the class reading book each day.

Pupils do not develop an ability to write accurately and at length. Leaders have very recently introduced a new approach to the teaching of writing. It is too early to measure the impact this is having.

Recent changes to the curriculum in the early years are helping to prepare children for Year 1. The school has identified the important vocabulary and small steps of learning that children need. For example, when making hedgehogs in an adult-led activity, children learn words such as 'hibernate'. In lessons, children happily sing the days of the week song. However, during independent time, learning is not as productive. Adult intervention does not happen soon enough to extend children's understanding.

Pupils benefit from the school's personal development programme. This supports their well-being effectively. Pupils demonstrate knowledge of different faiths, making comparisons between different holy books. At playtimes, pupils take part in 'Active 10', playing games to help them to keep fit. They enjoy playing sports like football and basketball. Pupils are given the opportunity to take part in competitions. The cross country was particularly memorable for pupils. Learning about food technology is an important part of the curriculum. For example, in Year 6, pupils learn to make healthy meals, such as a fresh tomato pasta. They know how to keep a healthy mind by participating in 'calm sessions', which encourage them to be reflective. Pupils understand the importance of sleeping well.

The school has worked with local partners to improve the systems to check pupils' attendance. Leaders have a persistent whole-school approach to improving attendance. They know families well and focus on building relationships. This work has had a positive impact on most pupils. Leaders continue to work on further improving the attendance of those pupils who do not regularly attend school.

Leaders are determined to continue the developments in the school. They know the school well and have implemented timely and sustainable improvements. Leaders at all levels, including the CEO, trustees and governors, have been key partners in reshaping the strategic direction of the school. Governors and trustees perform the required statutory duties well. They hold senior leaders to account effectively. Teachers feel that leaders consider their needs and prioritise their well-being when introducing new improvements to the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the early years, during child-led learning time, children are left for too long without purposeful interaction from adults. This means that opportunities to extend and develop children's vocabulary and understanding can be missed. The school should ensure all adults understand when and how to intervene in children's independent play, to help move this on.
- Some pupils do not have the knowledge or stamina to write accurately and at length. The school should continue to embed the newly introduced programme for writing, ensuring that staff deliver this consistently well in all year groups.

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	143962
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10290321
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	469
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Steadman
Headteacher	Emma Cooke
Website	www.balbycentralprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Rose Learning Trust.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative education provider.

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 held meetings with the headteacher, curriculum leaders and other staff. Inspectors also met with the trust early years director. They talked to the chair of governors, vice chair of governors and trustees.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, geography, science and design technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to leaders, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- 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 staff survey and Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including any free-text responses. Inspectors talked to pupils to gather their views on school life. They also talked to parents.

Inspection team

Lesley Allwood, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Nick Styles	Ofsted Inspector
Shan Brough Jones	Ofsted Inspector

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