

Armthorpe Shaw Wood Academy

Mere Lane, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN3 2DG

Inspection dates	20–21 April 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive headteacher has made considerable improvements across the school since the previous inspection. Pupils now make good progress from their different starting points in a range of subjects.
- Governors and senior leaders have strengthened the staff team by improving teaching and increasing achievement.
- Middle leaders have a greater impact on the quality of provision in their areas than at the time of the previous inspection.
- Pupils enjoy reading, are taught well and reach excellent standards in phonics (letters and the sounds they represent).
- An exciting curriculum ignites pupils' interest. They discuss different views and opinions sensibly to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- A highly effective pastoral care team ensures that all pupils are supported and nurtured. The school's provision for personal development and welfare is first-rate.
- Pupils are well behaved. Their conduct around the school is impeccable and they are respectful towards staff.
- Attendance has improved because pupils enjoy school and are enthusiastic learners. The vast majority of parents and carers agree.
- The most able pupils' achievement has risen and those pupils who have special educational needs or disability progress well.
- Currently, children in the early years are making swift improvement in their learning, which is suitably preparing them for their move into Year 1.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- At times, pupils do not produce extended pieces of writing in enough depth.
- Disadvantaged pupils have not made enough progress over time in writing.
- Teachers do not apply the school's agreed target-setting procedures consistently, so progress varies.
- Teachers do not share the good practice seen in pupils' books widely enough across the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sustain the rapid rates of pupils' progress, especially those made in writing recently, by:
 - ensuring that the progress of disadvantaged pupils in writing accelerates
 - making clear the school's agreed procedures for setting pupils' targets and ensuring that teachers apply them consistently in every year group to raise standards
 - developing pupils' resilience so they can produce extended pieces of writing in greater depth, making the most of the time available
 - sharing the best practice seen in pupils' books more widely among staff to show what senior leaders expect.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The executive headteacher has high expectations of staff and pupils which have resulted in considerable improvement since the previous inspection. She has communicated her ambition for pupils' personal and academic development to staff successfully, resulting in pupils' good progress and a positive and nurturing ethos.
- Together with senior leaders, the headteacher guides improvements very well, keeping pupils' progress at the heart of all decisions. Parents explain that changes made by leaders have increased children's enjoyment of school. One parent wrote, 'My children have been attending this school for many years and it continues to improve year on year. Children are happy. They look forward to attending the school and always come home with a smile.'
- Senior and middle leaders check pupils' progress closely by agreeing assessments, observing lessons and talking to pupils about their learning. They have a clear picture of where the school's strengths lie and carefully steer changes with the use of targeted action plans. Leaders have improved teaching and learning in mathematics, phonics and reading using this method of whole-school development.
- Staff training is very effective. Regular checks on the quality of teaching ensure that senior leaders tailor support exactly where it is needed most. Leaders hold staff accountable by linking progression in teachers' salaries closely to the levels of progress pupils make.
- Leaders have high expectations of teaching and, as a result, teaching over time is now good. In some classes, particular strengths in teaching enable pupils to make rapid progress. Pupils' progress in writing is not as strong as in other subjects. Staff do not set targets as effectively in this subject and some pupils find it difficult to sustain writing in depth and for extended periods of time.
- Senior leaders are strongly committed to providing equal opportunities. For example, they ensure that pupils who have special educational needs or disability are well supported. A whole-school system of planning meets their specific needs. Pupils who speak English as an additional language have benefited from the school's emphasis on developing vocabulary. This has helped this group to make better than expected progress. Teachers have been trained to ask probing questions that deepen and extend learning so the most able pupils in the school now reach higher standards than in previous years.
- A new curriculum inspires pupils and ignites their interests in a range of topics. Leaders make sure that the curriculum prepares pupils well for later life in modern Britain. Pupils understand the concept of democracy, because they are often asked to vote on decisions made in school, such as who should represent them on the school council or what food they would like on the canteen menu.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness through the new curriculum. For example, when pupils studied Chinese New Year, they worked together to create an impressive Chinese dragon.
- Leaders arrange many after-school activities and make sure that pupils have frequent opportunities to enjoy a wide range of experiences. Educational visits, such as the Year 3 residential trip, boost pupils' enjoyment and ambition. Visitors often give presentations to children too. These enriching experiences help pupils gain high aspirations about what they may achieve in later life.
- Leaders use the physical education and sport premium for primary schools efficiently. It has supported pupils to access a much wider variety of sports and the school has been very successful in many sporting competitions. A dedicated sports coach teaches physical education across the school and has helped staff to develop their skills.
- Governors and leaders have made good use of the pupil premium to reduce gaps between the attainment of the school's disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally. This funding has been most successful in helping disadvantaged pupils to reach the expected levels of progress in mathematics and reading. However, it has not yet been quite as effective in developing writing skills. Disadvantaged pupils have only recently made rapid progress in writing.
- The pastoral team lead by example, providing expert support for pupils who are vulnerable or in need. Behaviour has improved and staff deal swiftly with any rare incidents of bullying or name-calling.
- The school has received only brief involvement from the local authority since becoming an academy. Leaders actively commission their own consultants from outside the local authority to help them evaluate the school and support the staff. Teachers find it useful to meet with colleagues from other schools in the neighbourhood and appreciate the local authority's role in organising these meetings.

■ The governance of the school

- Governance has substantially strengthened since the previous inspection. Governors receive regular reports from senior staff and make visits to the school to see the impact of their actions on teaching and learning and pupils' progress. They seek out useful training to improve their skills and actively recruit new governors who will fill any gaps in their knowledge or experience. Governors are more able to challenge the school when they feel it is necessary.
- Governors carefully check the way funding has been used to ensure value for money. This role includes considering the decisions that leaders make about teachers' pay to make sure that they are fair. Governors make excellent use of information about pupils' progress to assess the school's success. A dedicated governor oversees safeguarding requirements, using specific skills to maintain high standards of safety.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The pastoral team are particularly good at improving outcomes for pupils who are vulnerable and for looked after children. The pastoral team works closely with outside agencies to support families and carefully manage referrals.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching over time is good. Teachers have developed strong subject knowledge. They use explanation and questioning effectively to provide pupils with a depth of knowledge, skills and understanding in a range of subjects across the curriculum.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons because teachers provide fun learning experiences that engage their interests. Teachers consult pupils about their prior knowledge and what they would like to find out before they begin new topics. As a result, pupils are motivated in their learning and show high levels of commitment to developing their knowledge.
- The teaching of phonics is excellent due to the consistent approach used across the school. Phonics teaching is carefully organised to meet the specific needs of different groups of pupils. A very high proportion of pupils have achieved the levels expected in phonics by the end of Year 1.
- Pupils read well and enjoy reading both in and out of school. Structured reading sessions take place regularly so that pupils develop comprehension skills and widen their vocabulary. Teachers introduce vocabulary specific to individual subjects that help pupils deepen their knowledge. For example, in a Year 2 English lesson, pupils were able to describe and apply the meaning of 'embedded clauses' and 'adverbs' when finding them within texts.
- Teachers use the school's marking policy effectively. However, teachers do not consistently follow the whole-school policy for setting pupils' targets for improvement. When teachers do apply the agreed procedures, then pupils make more rapid progress than in classes where this is not the case.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards mathematics and enjoy the challenges offered. Teachers assess pupils' learning well during mathematics lessons and generally intervene quickly if pupils are finding the work too easy or too difficult.
- Pupils' writing skills vary across classes. In some lessons, pupils do not show enough resilience to sustain extended pieces of work and so the length, quantity and depth of their writing can be limited.
- The quality of support provided by teaching assistants is often good. For example, in a lesson about multiplication, the teaching assistant supported a lower-ability group well by using a variety of apparatus effectively. Consequently, this group were able to achieve similar rates of progress to their higher-ability classmates.
- Staff support pupils who have special educational needs or disability very skilfully, aware of their specific needs and how to help them meet their potential. This was particularly evident for pupils with hearing difficulties, where staff used effective strategies to help them understand instructions.
- Homework is well planned and interesting. It aims to get the whole family engaged in learning together and parents praised the use of homework in Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Pupils' work books are well presented and show improvements over time. In some classes, books are exemplary. Leaders have not shared teachers' best practice widely enough with all staff as an example of their high expectations.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- An efficient and nurturing pastoral team ensure the safety and well-being of all pupils and offer excellent support to pupils who are vulnerable. The pastoral team provide wide-ranging help to parents of children in school and work closely with outside agencies to improve the lives of families.
- Pupils feel extremely safe in school and say that adults are there to help them, always listening to what they may have to say. Pupils explain that staff act quickly to deal with any bullying and stop it happening again.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very strong and support the good learning that takes place in lessons. Staff know pupils exceptionally well and are aware of their particular interests and needs.
- The breakfast club provides a caring environment that effectively prepares pupils for the start of the school day. Pupils enjoy their time in the breakfast club, socialising with their friends safely.
- Pupils have many opportunities in lessons to talk about their feelings and emotional well-being. Teachers plan activities to encourage reflection, such as in a Year 4 class where pupils explored their emotions while finding out about the celebration of 'Passover'. Discussions in this class enhanced pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
- The school teaches pupils how to stay safe in many different situations, such as when using the internet or social media. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe when using roads as pedestrians and cyclists, and older classes enjoyed attending training off-site at a local safety workshop.
- Staff place great emphasis on pupils' health and hygiene. Younger pupils know the importance of healthy eating and explain that 'drinking water helps our brains work better'. They know that it is important to have a good night's sleep and why hand-washing is necessary for keeping germs at bay.
- Pupils take part in a wide range of extra-curricular sports clubs. Pupils say that their physical education lessons 'help us to keep fit as well as providing challenges, building up our skills, courage and stamina'.
- Roles such as being on the school council or safety group help pupils learn about responsibility, democracy and managing risks. Staff value the opinions of pupils and regularly gather their views in surveys or ask them to vote on issues to help make school decisions. During the inspection, groups of pupils worked with a visiting photographer to create images that would represent their vision for the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are impeccably polite and well mannered. They step aside for adults in the corridors and hold doors open to allow others to walk through first. They are friendly and show high levels of respect for visitors and all adults in school.
- Staff encourage pupils to form strong working relationships with their peers and to discuss different viewpoints maturely. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils helped each other to solve complex problems by discussing their ideas and sharing their reasoning.
- During playtimes and lunch breaks, pupils are lively and energetic but well behaved. They understand that school rules are there to keep them safe while they learn and play.
- Older pupils are quick to explain how much behaviour has improved in school since the previous inspection. They have been involved in creating the behaviour and rewards policy and say that it works.
- Pupils are happy in school and, as a result, attendance has continued to improve over time.
- Parents agree that the school looks after their children well. Pupils confirm that staff are helpful and supportive by showing care and concern for their safety and well-being.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Outcomes for pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 are good because pupils make good progress from their different starting points. By the end of Year 6 in 2015, almost all pupils were working at the expected levels for their age and an increasing number were working at higher levels. Pupils are well prepared for their next school.

- Pupils' achievement in the Year 1 phonics check is outstanding and the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard has been well above the national figure for the last three years. This is because staff teach phonics so well by ensuring that pupils have sufficient challenge to help them make speedy progress.
- Since the previous inspection, gaps in achievement between the school's disadvantaged pupils and all other pupils nationally have narrowed considerably in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2015, the gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school also narrowed considerably in reading and mathematics. These improvements are indicative of leaders' high expectations and the successful changes made to the way reading and mathematics are taught. In writing, however, leaders recognise that the increase in standards has not been as rapid. Disadvantaged pupils remain two to three terms behind their peers in school and others nationally in their writing skills.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make very good progress from their different starting points. Careful monitoring of their progress leads to effective and timely interventions. Senior leaders check that teaching meets these pupils' individual needs to ensure that they receive good support.
- The school's own assessment information shows that pupils who speak English as an additional language are currently making particularly strong progress in all subjects. Observations in lessons, discussion with pupils and the progress seen in pupils' books corroborate this information.
- The most able pupils achieve well. They are challenged more frequently now and a much higher proportion of pupils made more than expected progress in all subjects by the end of Year 6 in 2015.
- A lower proportion of disadvantaged pupils reached the higher standards in reading and writing compared with their peers in 2015. Leaders are carefully considering how best to use the pupil premium this year to close this gap.

Early years provision

is good

- Children make good progress from their different starting points during their Nursery Year and move into the Reception class ready for the new challenges on offer.
- Teachers assess children accurately before they start Nursery by carrying out home visits to talk with their parents and visiting them in any pre-school settings they attend. They make good use of previous information gathered by staff from local playgroups and the children's centre.
- This effective assessment continues throughout the early years where staff observe children carefully to help them plan the next steps in their learning. Some children have more specific needs and staff support them effectively.
- The quality of teaching is good. Staff successfully play alongside children, following their interests, while deepening their learning by asking just the right question at the right time.
- Teaching assistants generally offer high levels of support for children. For example, in one class a teaching assistant used the shape of snacks at milk time to help children talk about, recognise and compare a wide variety of shapes. Teaching is not yet outstanding because staff do not consistently take this kind of opportunity to extend children's learning.
- Leadership is a strength in the early years. Leaders have a detailed knowledge of each individual child and know the practice of their staff well. They have an accurate picture of where and when provision is at its best and their action plans focus on the correct areas for improvement. They know, for example, that children's communication and language skills in Nursery are an area they need to improve.
- The early years leader checks teaching and learning closely. She ensures that staff tailor tasks to meet the needs of pupils by offering challenge and support as required.
- The early years curriculum is rich and exciting with many real-life experiences to stimulate children's interests, such as incubating eggs and hatching chicks to learn about life cycles.
- Developing children's early writing skills has been a priority in Reception this year and children are making good progress. For example, the most able pupils could capably discuss their knowledge of phonics in depth to help them spell words correctly. Other pupils were eager to 'have a go' at spelling more complex words such as 'incubator'. They used alphabet strips and wall displays to help them remember and write letter sounds.

- In mathematics, children confidently apply their knowledge of number, shape and space in other activities. This was seen in the Nursery class where children were engrossed in designing and building elaborate sandcastles. The teacher intervened in a timely manner to encourage children to count the number of shells and pebbles they had used and to make flags for the top of their castles by applying their knowledge of shape.
- Children are enthusiastic learners who behave sensibly inside the classroom as well as during their outdoor learning times. They respond promptly to staff requests, such as when they move around the gymnasium at different speeds and levels when inspired by their coach in physical education. Staff ensure that they fully meet welfare requirements and teach the children how to keep safe in a range of situations and activities.
- Parents are very happy with the early years provision and are increasingly involved in the school's work. They regularly attend trips off-site and join in with workshops to find out more about how they can help their children at home.

School details

Unique reference number	138705
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10012077

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	521
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Cawley
Headteacher	Jo Campbell (executive headteacher)
Telephone number	01302 831307
Website	www.shawwood.co.uk
Email address	admin@shawwod.doncaster.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 May 2014

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is above average. (The pupil premium is additional government funding provided for children looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals.)
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability, including those who have an education, health and care plan, is below average.
- The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background or who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school runs a breakfast club and after-school club which are managed by the governing body.
- The children in the Nursery attend part time for 15 hours per week on a flexible basis. Some children attend for 2.5 full days, others attend mornings or afternoons only. Some parents pay for extra provision so that their children attend the Nursery full time. Children in the Reception class attend full time.
- Armthorpe Shaw Wood Academy converted to become an academy on 1 September 2012. A new structure for the leadership team was adopted in January 2015 when the current executive headteacher was appointed and two heads of school took up their new roles. A large proportion of staff are new to the school since the previous inspection.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 20 lessons or parts of lessons and conducted three observations jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, senior and middle leaders, and other school staff.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their work in lessons, looked at books, listened to pupils read and met with groups of pupils from each key stage. Inspectors also took account of a recent survey of pupils' views conducted by the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 47 responses to Parent View and also a recent survey conducted by school leaders. Inspectors also spoke with a number of parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of the 41 questionnaires returned by members of the school staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at progress and attainment information, staff and pupil targets, and records relating to behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents and other information relating to safeguarding and looked at the school's safeguarding procedures in action.
- Inspectors visited the school's breakfast and after-school club, lunchtime and playtime activities and a whole-school assembly to check standards of behaviour at different times of the day.

Inspection team

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