

Darton Primary School

Station Road, Darton, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S75 5AD

Inspection dates

12–13 October 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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, managers and governors are very ambitious for the pupils. They have high expectations of pupils and staff. As a result of these and good teaching, outcomes have improved over time, and are now good.
- Teachers plan interesting tasks that engage pupils well in their learning. Work set matches pupils' needs and abilities and helps them to make good progress.
- Teachers' clear explanations help pupils to settle quickly to the work that is to be done. Pupils are keen to learn and contribute well to their good progress.
- Teaching assistants are well trained and skilled in supporting pupils' good learning both inside and outside the classroom.
- Pupils say they enjoy school and that they are safe. They behave well and have good attitudes to learning.
- Pupils' attendance is above average. Parents and carers make sure that their children are on time for school.
- Leaders have made sure that there are excellent safeguarding procedures in place to protect pupils.
- Systems for checking teachers' performance are good. Professional development and support for staff have resulted in good teaching and good leadership. The multi-academy trust makes a very good contribution to improving the quality of teaching and leadership.
- Leaders track pupils' progress carefully. Pupils falling behind are identified quickly and given additional support to help them make good progress.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strength of the school. The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils treat each other and adults with respect.
- Children make good progress in the early years because of good teaching and leadership.
- Governors are knowledgeable about education and offer strong challenge and support to school leaders.
- Occasionally, pupils' learning is not checked well enough in class to provide additional challenge and support.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Sometimes, pupils do not explain clearly how they have solved problems in mathematics.
- In subjects other than English and mathematics, there are times when work set is not challenging enough for pupils to make strong progress.
- Leaders' plans for improvement do not show clearly how changes to be made will improve the quality of teaching and learning over time.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to strengthen pupils' outcomes, by:
 - using skilful questioning to develop a deeper understanding of what is being learned, particularly for the most able pupils
 - checking learning swiftly to strengthen the support and challenge for pupils, especially the least able pupils
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills across a wide range of subjects
 - ensuring that pupils provide full and clearly reasoned explanations when solving mathematical problems
 - making sure that pupils' knowledge and understanding are consistently deepened across a wide range of subjects.
- Increase the impact of leadership by being crystal clear about how planned actions will develop and improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes over time.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and governors have developed a strong sense of purpose among all the staff and morale is high. They have been very successful in developing the quality of teaching and strengthening pupils' outcomes across the school. Staff are giving leaders their full support in improving the school.
- Systems for checking the performance of staff and the quality of teaching are thorough and very effective. Performance targets are aspirational and high-quality support is given. Middle leaders are playing their part in supporting the development of good teaching and learning.
- A wide range of information is used to determine the quality of teaching. Strong practice is shared across the school and the trust. Teachers and leaders have benefited from tailored professional development and this has improved teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- Teaching assistants are provided with good training to fulfil their roles and have a performance review to identify their training needs and career aspirations. This is a good example of commitment to equality of opportunity for all.
- Newly qualified teachers receive support that enables them to help pupils make good progress and learn well.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school and know what has to be done to strengthen its overall effectiveness even further.
- A sophisticated system for checking pupils' progress is used very effectively by leaders. Timely action is taken to ensure that pupils are given additional support to meet their needs so they do not fall behind. Teachers and leaders have raised expectations and are also identifying when pupils need additional challenge to exceed targets.
- The curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' learning and their personal development, behaviour and welfare. There is a wide range of subjects which contribute well to pupils' good progress and a focus on developing reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils say they enjoy the well-planned themes such as 'Crime and Punishment', 'The Miners' Strike' and 'The Egyptians'. Challenging work is suitably adapted to meet the needs and abilities of pupils, including the most able. There is a good range of extra activities for pupils, including visits to places of interest.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is strong. Pupils have a good understanding of various cultures and religions through assemblies, visits, the teaching of religious education and activities in many subjects. They socialise well, are tolerant and respectful and are developing a good understanding of democracy and the law. Magistrates visit the school to support pupils' learning and there are visits to the local town hall to see democracy in action. Pupils are developing a clear understanding of what is required to be a good citizen.

- The primary school physical education and sports funding is used well. The funding has increased participation in sport and is used to provide sports coaching for pupils and training for staff in the teaching of physical education. There are good links with local professional teams for basketball and ice hockey as well as visits from local Olympians and Paralympians. There are many pupils taking part in local competitive sport and competitions across the trust. Pupils enjoy sport and the staff are good role models, taking part in running clubs and competitive netball across the trust.
- The pupil premium funding is used very effectively and promotes the good attendance of disadvantaged pupils and the good learning support they receive when necessary.
- The trust has supported the school very well and provides good training, mentoring and guidance for leaders and teachers, including newly qualified teachers. The trust's support has helped the school to strengthen teaching and leadership over time. Working in partnership with the trust allows the school to share its developing expertise in the teaching of reading and writing. The trust has a comprehensive understanding of the school and works very effectively with the headteacher.

Governance of the school

- Governors are ambitious for the pupils and staff. They make a good contribution to the leadership of the school. Governors have audited their skills and made a number of changes to their membership in order to strengthen their contribution to leadership. They are highly skilled and have educational expertise to support their work. They have a very clear understanding of how all groups of pupils are achieving. They use judicious support from the trust to obtain an independent view on how well pupils are learning. Governors challenge and support the headteacher and other leaders, including subject leaders, to make sure pupils are achieving well.
- Governors check the progress of the school regularly and there is clear evidence of improvement. However, current plans for improvement do not enable governors to check success in terms of improvements to teaching and learning throughout the year.
- Governors have a good understanding of the finances of the school and know that funding for sport, disadvantaged pupils and special educational needs is used well. They have a strong understanding about the link between teachers' performance and pay. Governors ensure that their responsibilities are fulfilled well and have a good strategic overview of the school and its improvements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. High-quality systems ensure that pupils, including the most vulnerable, are safe and protected from harm. Staff are well trained and vigilant. The school fulfils all of the requirements for checking staff's suitability to work with children. There is a clear ethos across the school that sets the safety of pupils as a high priority. Assemblies and work across the curriculum gives pupils a clear understanding of what to do should they believe they might be at risk.

- Pupils are inducted well into the school and there are very strong home–school links. The school’s attendance registers are meticulously kept and the whereabouts of pupils is known at all times. Exceptionally few pupils are regularly absent and this contributes well to pupils’ safety and well-being. Governors have expertise in safeguarding and child protection. They use their expertise well to check that the school’s procedures are protecting children well. There are very effective links with external agencies to ensure pupils’ safeguarding.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Over time, leaders’ relentless drive for improvement has made sure that the quality of teaching is good overall. Training and support for teachers and teaching assistants provided in school and across the trust have improved the quality of teaching to help pupils make good progress.
- Expectations are usually high with work pitched at an appropriate standard to challenge pupils effectively so they make good progress. Interesting tasks are planned that build on pupils’ prior knowledge and help them make good progress. Teachers use a wide range of resources to motivate pupils and to support pupils’ learning.
- Teachers’ good subject knowledge helps them to give clear and concise explanations about what has to be done. Consequently, children settle quickly to their work and make good progress, especially in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There are some good examples of very effective and skilful questioning that challenges pupils of all abilities. Pupils are keen to answer and support their learning well. Occasionally, questions are not pitched at an appropriate level to challenge the most able pupils well enough and on these occasions their learning slows.
- Pupils’ work is checked regularly in class to make sure they are making good progress and any misconceptions are cleared up quickly. There are times when pupils’ work, particularly that of the least able pupils, is not checked swiftly enough. As a result, additional support is not provided quickly enough to help them make good progress. For some other pupils, including the most able, extra challenge is sometimes missed and although progress is good it is not outstanding.
- Across many subjects there are good opportunities for pupils to develop their reading and writing skills. The school has focused well on these to make sure that progress has strengthened in reading and writing to be as good as in mathematics. Even though pupils are making good progress in mathematics, there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their good mathematical skills in other subjects. Also, pupils are not highly skilled in explaining their reasons for tackling mathematical problems in particular ways.
- An analysis of pupils’ work showed that they are developing good knowledge, skills and understanding across a wide range of subjects. However, there are at times when pupils are not challenged well enough to deepen their knowledge about particular subjects and themes. A minority of parents indicated that their children’s homework was not appropriate for their age. Inspectors sampled pupils’ homework and found that homework makes a good contribution to learning.

- Teaching assistants have benefited well from additional training and are providing good support for pupils. They support a wide range of abilities in class and lead small groups of pupils outside of the classroom to help these pupils' learning catch up.
- Good relationships and mutual respect exist between pupils and adults. This helps lessons to flow smoothly.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident and welcome opportunities to speak with adults. Pupils are polite, listen to each other's points of view and treat each other with respect.
- Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy school and feel safe. They understand how to use the internet safely and have days that are focused on safety and the use of technology. Visitors, including the police and fire services, give them a good understanding of how to stay safe.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to take part in activities that keep them fit and healthy. Pupils organise their own healthy tuck shop at breaktimes. The children in Reception are encouraged to develop habits of healthy eating with fruit available at all times. Pupils manage the profit from their 'tuck shop' to support charity work in Africa.
- Pupils take pride in their appearance and work, with some pupils persisting well with challenging tasks. Handwriting and presentation are usually of a good standard. The school promotes equality of opportunity for all, with pupils enthusing about their work about the Paralympics and disability.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to take on posts of responsibility. For example, they enjoy being 'playtime buddies' to help all pupils have someone to play with. Pupils are particularly proud to be members of the school's 'eco-council' and have opportunities to save energy in school and develop parts of the local community by gardening.
- Pupils have good opportunities to use democratic processes by voting for their school council and voting for activities during 'golden time'. They are clear that not everyone can be successful and they accept the outcomes of votes. Older pupils were keen to share their views about the outcome of 'the referendum'.
- Pupils say bullying is rare and they make efforts to resolve their differences. They are confident that adults will listen to them and respond appropriately should they have any problems. Almost all parents agreed that any concerns are resolved quickly.
- School leaders have excellent systems in place to support pupils' safety and safeguarding, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils.
- Parents and staff are confident that pupils are safe and well cared for in school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils manage their behaviour well both inside and outside the classroom. They enjoy rewards for good behaviour and are clear about what is expected of them. Each class has opportunities to add to the school rules and create their additional classroom behaviour rules. They keep these rules well and behaviour is good.

- Pupils get on well together. They conduct themselves well because of the high expectations of adults and the good relationships that exist between pupils and adults.
- There are very effective systems in place to ensure that pupils attend well and are punctual to school. Attendance is above average with exceptionally few pupils regularly absent from school. Pupils are very punctual to school because they enjoy learning and their parents help them to arrive on time. Pupils 'line up' quickly at breaktimes and lunchtime to make sure that lessons start on time.
- The school environment is well-cared-for. There are many high-quality displays of pupils' good work across a wide range of subjects. The school is free from litter as pupils take care of their school environment.
- The school is a calm and purposeful place with pupils concentrating well on their work. However, very occasionally a few pupils lose concentration in class and they sometimes interrupt others. Generally, pupils are keen to learn and make a good contribution to their learning as they have good attitudes and respond well to their teachers and other adults.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Overall, pupils' progress has been improving since the opening of the school. Leaders have strengthened the quality of teaching and raised teachers' expectations to make sure pupils are progressing well.
- Inspectors found that current pupils are making good progress in reading, writing, mathematics and a wide range of subjects. Leaders and governors, along with the trust, have taken very effective action to overcome the shortcomings that were evident in previous years. Overall, current pupils are making securely good progress in their learning.
- Leaders use published information on pupils' outcomes very skilfully to identify key areas for improvement. As a result of targeted training for staff, pupils' reading at the end of Year 1 improved strongly in 2016 to be above average. Those children, now in Year 3, who had low scores in the reading check in 2015, have made accelerated progress and inspectors found their reading skills to be good. The most able pupils have a very clear understanding of the challenging texts they are reading.
- Leaders and staff have focused strongly on improving pupils' writing skills, which are now good across the school. They have continued to improve the progress made by pupils in reading and mathematics so pupils are making good progress in these subjects.
- The most able pupils are making good progress and attain as well as similar pupils nationally. They are challenged effectively and homework makes a good contribution to their learning. Their writing skills have developed strongly and enable them to produce some very high-quality writing.
- Current information for those leaving Year 6 in 2016, although not finalised yet, shows above-average progress in mathematics and very effective progress in reading. In writing it shows average progress which is a strong improvement on the progress made in 2015.

- An analysis of pupils' current work in other year groups, and from last year, shows that pupils are making good progress across the school. Increased teacher expectations and leaders' support for teaching is paying off in improving pupils' progress. Pupils respond well to teachers' advice. Their good attitudes to learning lead to good outcomes.
- There are too few pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make comparisons between their progress and all pupils nationally. However, inspectors found that the school integrates these pupils well into mainstream education and caters for their needs well.
- There are very few disadvantaged pupils. An analysis of their work across the school shows that the progress they are making is broadly in line with other pupils nationally and that attainment differences are diminishing. This is because of the good quality of teaching they are receiving and the additional support the school puts in place to help them progress well.
- Reading is promoted strongly across the school. There has been much training to ensure that staff, including teaching assistants, are highly skilled in the teaching of early reading. Pupils enjoy reading and say they are interested in the variety of new books that have been purchased for them. They enjoy selecting books from the school library and are interested in the books they read to adults during 'guided reading' sessions. Teachers keep copious notes to support pupils' next steps in improving reading skills. Pupils are keen to read to adults and read regularly both at home and in school.

Early years provision

Good

- Children are safe and happy because of the secure procedures that exist in the early years and the good links with parents. There is a calm and purposeful environment where children settle well and cooperate well together.
- Over time, most children enter the early years with skills that are below those typical for their age. Others have typical or above typical skills for their age.
- Children are making good progress in the early years. By the end of Reception, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development is at least average with a good proportion exceeding the early learning goals. Children are making good progress because of good teaching and the very effective deployment of staff to support children's learning.
- The leader and other adults have high expectations and quickly build good relationships with children. Well-planned activities to meet children's needs and abilities engage them well in their learning. This helps children make good progress. Very occasionally, the most able children spend too long on tasks that are not challenging enough for them.
- Good leadership makes sure that there are strong links between home and school as well as other providers that the children have attended. This helps adults to get to know the children's needs and abilities quickly. Swift assessment of children's skills enables the leader to focus adults on strengthening particular aspects of learning such as early reading skills and mathematics.

- The curriculum contributes well to children’s good learning and their good personal development, behaviour and welfare. Children are gaining confidence, follow routines well and play safely. They are excited by the ‘police station’ in the outdoor area, playing different characters and learning well about right and wrong and the role of the police. There is a strong link between the early years leader and key stage 1 teachers. This makes sure that children in the mixed Reception and Year 1 class are provided for well.
- Children’s behaviour is very good indeed. They are highly motivated by the stimulating activities that are planned for them. They work well together and are keen to share their learning to support good progress. Children play safely with each other and tidy away without being prompted. They organise their time well and respond well to instructions.
- Provision for indoor and outdoor learning is good. The outdoor area has recently been upgraded and is used well by children. There are good resources to support children’s learning, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Parents are kept well informed about their children’s learning. They receive information about how their children are taught skills such as early reading skills. This helps them to support their children at home.
- All the appropriate welfare and safeguarding requirements are met in the early years.
- Children are well prepared for learning in Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	140602
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	10023786

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

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	315
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mandy Daws
Headteacher	Jo Lancett
Telephone number	01226 394050
Website	www.dartonprimary.com
Email address	darton.primary@smat.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Darton Primary School converted to become an academy on 1 February 2014. It is one of seven schools in a multi-academy trust named St Mary's Academy Trust. When its predecessor school, also named Darton Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to require improvement overall. The headteacher took up her post in June 2014.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is approximately one third of the national average.

- Almost all pupils are White British. The vast majority of pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who have support for special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is average.
- In the early years, children have part-time education in the Nursery and full-time education in Reception.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There have been significant changes in staffing and leadership since the conversion to academy status.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of teaching and learning in parts of lessons, with one session jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Throughout the two days of the inspection, inspectors spoke with pupils, both individually and in groups, about learning and safety.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading. They reviewed pupils' work in lessons and analysed samples of work in pupils' books.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with the chair of the governing body and four other governors. An inspector held a meeting with a representative of the trust.
- Inspectors also held meetings with senior leaders and other staff.
- Inspectors looked at the school's review of its own performance, its development and improvement plan, a number of key school policies and the minutes of governing body meetings. They considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors analysed 37 responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View). They analysed school questionnaires completed by parents.
- There were 18 staff questionnaires completed and considered by inspectors.
- Some children from Years 3, 4 and 5 took part in an off-site educational visit on the second day of the inspection.

Inspection team

Jim McGrath, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Clay	Ofsted Inspector
Juliet Demster	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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