

Dixons Music Primary

Trinity Road, Bradford BD5 0BE

Inspection dates	15–16 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The principal's clear vision for the school, and unrelenting drive to realise it, have resulted in considerable improvements since the previous inspection.
- This is a school where staff are absolutely committed to continuous improvement. They test out initiatives to find the best ways to help pupils learn. They are rigorous in innovating and this has brought significant dividends for pupils' learning and their well-being.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding because frequent expert advice from the principal has helped teachers, many of whom are new to the profession, to develop their skills at pace.
- Pupils in all year groups make outstanding progress and, overall, their attainment is above average. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and disability make the same rapid progress as their classmates.
- Pupils achieve well in music. They sing together with enthusiasm, following the teacher's lead carefully to get the pitch and tempo right.
- Pupils love learning and work hard because staff have successfully shared the school's high aspirations with them. They believe they can 'go to university, get a top job and have a great life'.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary: they are courteous and polite. They follow the school's strict routines for conduct so no time is wasted in lessons and movement around the building is orderly and brisk.
- Children in the Reception class get off to a flying start and are very well prepared for Year 1. This year a higher proportion are on track to reach the level expected for their age.
- The curriculum offers pupils a rich diet of music and performing arts along with a wide range of sporting activities, visits and visitors. This makes a very well-rounded contribution to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leadership at all levels is developing strongly. Middle leaders lead their areas energetically and with close attention to detail.
- Governance has improved. The governing body challenges senior and middle leaders regularly and rigorously. This has contributed well to the school's improvement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the assessment system closely matches the school's curriculum as both are developed to meet the needs of each new year group.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The principal is highly ambitious for the school: staff share her vision and morale is high. It is the school's distinctive ethos and culture that promote pupils' autonomy, independence and mastery of their learning and enables pupils to succeed.
- Leadership capacity has increased markedly since the previous inspection. A senior leader with specialist subject knowledge leads music. The principal of the linked secondary school has a supporting executive role and teachers have quickly developed the skills they need to lead subjects and aspects of the school's work. This reflects the culture of continuous improvement that pervades the school. All the senior and middle leaders are pursuing additional professional qualifications in leadership to increase their skills and inform their decision-making.
- Teachers are thorough in researching the best approaches to meeting pupils' needs and accelerating their progress. As the school grows, they are rigorous in implementing new approaches, such as that used to teach phonics, and this has helped to secure success in improving pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.
- The principal has a realistic view of the school's performance because systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality and impact of provision are robust. Consequently, planning for improvement is firmly based. Three cycles of assessment each year show how well pupils are learning and where extra help is needed to speed up their progress. The impact of these interventions is evaluated carefully.
- Pupil premium funding is used very effectively to provide specialist teaching for disadvantaged pupils who are falling behind, additional support for families and a nurture group. There is little difference between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and others this year.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is outstanding. The principal has successfully enabled new teachers to develop quickly into highly effective professionals. Daily visits to lessons give leaders a clear view of strengths and areas for development in teaching. There is a relentless approach to refining teaching so that pupils' progress continues to improve. Performance management has made a good contribution to the improvement in teaching seen since the previous inspection.
- Pupils experience a rich curriculum because they all learn to perform, sing and play a range of instruments. This develops their social skills very well as they gain an understanding of the importance of collaboration and discipline to achieve a high-quality performance. Music and instruments from a range of heritages expand their cultural awareness.
- Beyond the core subjects, learning is planned through topics. Starting points are pupils' own questions for which they seek answers. The school extends pupils' experiences of modern Britain and the world beyond through a wide range of visits and visitors. For instance, pupils have recently taken part in city-wide celebrations to mark the Queen's 90th birthday.
- The physical education and sports funding for primary schools is used well to provide pupils with a wide range of sporting experiences. These include martial arts, multi-sports and dance. Two thirds of pupils attend the after-school club where they have the opportunity to try out these sports as well as enjoy activities such as crafts and information technology (IT).
- The outstanding provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a key feature of school life. It permeates the curriculum and is closely aligned to the promotion of British values. Pupils are reminded of these values during lunchtime talks and through the daily experience of good manners and courteousness as they serve food and share during family dining.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance has improved since the previous inspection. The governing body no longer holds responsibility for two schools and the individual focus of its work has improved the way in which governors hold the school's leaders to account. Regular reports from the principal, provided and updated in a clear format, help governors track the school's progress. A strategic approach to recruiting governors has proved beneficial. An analysis of the skills governors bring to the governing body has helped identify where these could be strengthened.
 - The governing body holds regular challenge meetings at which senior and middle leaders provide information about performance and developments in their areas of responsibility. Governors are rigorous in their questioning and this has helped guide leaders as they develop new areas of the school's work, for instance the introduction of particular approaches to teaching mathematics and phonics.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school works closely with its partner secondary school to ensure that the procedures to keep pupils safe are rigorous. Safeguarding training for staff is up to date, including training on the prevention of extremism. Senior staff and governors are trained in recruitment procedures to ensure that staff are appropriately checked to enable them to work with children. All staff are very vigilant in their approach to pupils' welfare.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Pupils' books and the school's assessment data show that teaching over time is outstanding. The principal and all staff have high expectations of the quality of pupils' work and pupils aspire to do their best. Teachers know their pupils well and the quality of relationships is excellent.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work together closely, with weekly shared planning sessions and regular reviews of assessment information, to ensure that the needs of each pupil are known and that the strategies to address them are implemented consistently. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs or disability receive support that is tailored to their needs. Teaching assistants are not observers of learning: they are the facilitators of learning and this helps pupils in their acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Teaching makes a considerable contribution to pupils' communication skills. Teachers insist that answers are given in complete sentences while others in the class listen silently. They give pupils time to think through their responses and praise them when they improve their answer. Teachers give pupils plenty of opportunities to indicate silently whether they agree with an answer or not and then to explain their own thinking.
- The teaching of reading is highly effective. If pupils are struggling to gain the reading skills they need, they receive additional targeted help and teachers ensure that an adult listens to them read each day. The introduction of a highly structured approach to teaching phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) has accelerated pupils' progress in reading. All pupils have a weekly lesson in the well-stocked library: they enjoy reading books of their own choice including during breakfast club.
- Pupils take pride in their work, consistently making an effort to produce their best handwriting. They are encouraged by displays that show how their own handwriting has improved over time.
- Teachers are skilled at questioning pupils and assessing their learning as lessons progress. For instance, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, pupils did not immediately grasp the features of a parallelogram so the teacher quickly broke the new learning into smaller steps.
- The school's marking policy is followed consistently: feedback is built into the school day. One of the school's aims is that no pupil should go home with a misconception, so time is set aside daily for teachers to work with individuals or small groups. During this period, teaching assistants lead a daily 'maths meeting' for the class. This features mathematical songs, games and challenges to consolidate pupils' learning by providing opportunities for them to practise their basic skills. For example, Year 1 pupils sang rhymes about the days of the week and months of the year. They honed their understanding of 'more' or 'less' as they asked questions to work out which number up to 100 a pupil had chosen.
- Pupils in key stage 2 receive appropriate regular homework. For younger pupils, a booklet of optional weekly challenges carefully linked to classwork is provided. Parents are asked to read with their child each day.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Regular opportunities to learn to play instruments and sing together in public make a considerable contribution to pupils' self-esteem and confidence. For example, in a whole-school assembly, many pupils were self-assured enough to volunteer to sing a solo for a visiting musician. Pupils listen carefully, collaborate very well and show a high degree of discipline when performing.
- Pupils' independence is promoted very successfully. For instance, Year 3 pupils recently experienced a two-night residential visit, the first time away from home for some. At breakfast and lunchtimes pupils take responsibility for serving food and clearing away, jobs they do briskly and efficiently. Through family dining they learn the routines and good manners of enjoying meals together.

- The small number of pupils who struggle with social skills have daily sessions in the nurture group. Here they learn, for instance, how to take turns through playing games and participating in collaborative activities. The school carefully evaluates the impact of this provision on pupils' personal development and gauges when pupils are ready to rejoin their classes.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school. They know how to stay safe and can explain why online safety is important. Pupils say there is no bullying and this ties up with the school's records. The school's policy of noting incidents which over time may develop into bullying is well considered. Records are detailed and when there are concerns, regular contact with parents helps to ensure pupils are safe.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities. They are proud to be librarians and members of the school council. Councillors bring their ideas for improvements to the principal and are confident that their views are taken into account.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- The very small number of incidents of unacceptable behaviour shows that the school's high expectations pay dividends.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. From the outset, they develop a very clear understanding of how to be successful learners because the school has a number of excellent routines which provide a firm framework to support this. All pupils are expected, for example, to keep their eyes on the speaker, to move silently between activities, and to use cheers and applause in a disciplined way. Should their attention slip for a moment, they are reminded of the school's high expectations and quickly shape up.
- Attendance is above average for all groups of pupils. The school is diligent in following up absences and in supporting the families of the few pupils who are persistently absent.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- The principal has established a rigorous system for assessing pupils' progress. Aspects of pupils' progress are looked at weekly and a complete analysis is carried out three times a year. The school's policy of 'no child left behind' is paying dividends. The intensive interventions for pupils who are falling behind help them to keep up. Leaders are less confident about the assessment of key stage 2 work, given the demands of the new curriculum and assessment without levels.
- Children make excellent progress in the Reception Year from starting points that are below those typical for their age. In 2014 and 2015 the proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year was above average. The school's own assessment information for this year's cohort indicates an improvement on previous performance.
- The proportion of pupils who reached the expected level in the Year 1 phonics screening in 2014 was below average but 2015 saw a marked improvement to average. This year school leaders expect a sharp rise to well above average. The introduction of a new approach to teaching phonics has accelerated pupils' progress.
- The 2015 results of the key stage 1 national assessments were above average overall and well above average in reading. An above-average proportion of pupils achieved the higher level 3, indicating a high level of challenge for the most able pupils. Overall, boys outperformed girls and did better than boys nationally. Disadvantaged pupils did a little better than their classmates and much better than disadvantaged pupils nationally. Overall pupils, including those with special educational needs or disability, made outstanding progress from their starting points.
- The school's assessment information shows that the attainment of current Year 2 pupils is at least in line with that of the previous cohort. A high proportion have made more than the expected rate of progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is at least as good as that of others, indicating that the use of pupil premium funding is highly effective. The progress of pupils with special educational needs or disability is more variable.
- The school's assessments of the achievement of Year 3 pupils as they step up to the demands of the new national curriculum are cautious. However, leaders judge that almost all pupils have made at least expected progress this year. This is borne out by the work in pupils' books, which indicates that the most able pupils have made better than expected progress. In English, the most able pupils in Year 3 read fluently and widely: they talk knowledgeably about their favourite books and characters. Their writing across a breadth of genres shows complex structures and a good grasp of the impact of vocabulary on the reader.

- Across the school, the most able pupils are challenged very effectively. Leaders have adopted an approach to mathematics which develops mastery of the subject from the outset. The most able pupils rise successfully to challenges such as explaining their thinking to a classmate, proving that their answer is correct, and finding a pattern.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- The outstanding quality of teaching and the curriculum in the Reception class enables children to make excellent progress from their starting points which, overall, are below those typical for children of their age. By the time pupils leave Reception, they are very well prepared for Year 1. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development is well above average and set to rise again this year.
- Staff assess children's learning very well: they plan activities and experiences that both capture children's imaginations and are challenging for children of all abilities. For example, children concentrated for a sustained period on testing out how far their trucks would travel when released down a sloping plank. They measured and compared the varying distances and considered what difference pushing the trucks would make.
- Children rapidly learn initial phonics sounds and build on them well. They apply their phonics knowledge and skills very well in their writing. The most able children write confidently and independently about, for instance the features of a large, detailed picture. They choose their own sentence structure and sophisticated vocabulary. Staff give strong attention to ensuring children learn a secure pencil grip and how to form their letters and numbers correctly. This lays very good foundations for future learning.
- Children rapidly develop their mathematical skills. For instance, expert questioning enabled some to explain what estimating means. Children could identify the missing number in a sequence up to 20 and explain in full sentences how they worked this out.
- Music forms an integral part of learning right from the start. Children sing with the whole school in assembly and begin to learn to play a range of instruments such as the djembe drum.
- Children are taught how to be successful learners as soon as they join the Reception class. This does much to promote their confidence and self-esteem. They follow the school's excellent routines such as silent movement between activities and tracking the person speaking. This ensures that no time is wasted. They answer questions in full sentences while others listen quietly.
- Children behave extremely well and engage fully in the activities provided for them. They relish opportunities to cooperate and learn together. For example, in the 'travel agents' they practised their early writing and mathematical skills as they offered customers brochures, filled in booking forms and took deposits. Great concentration went into packing cases and working out whether some items were too big to fit in.
- The leadership of the early years is strong and this has led to well-designed improvements in the outdoor provision. Assessment information is used very well to identify appropriate 'next steps' for children which move them on quickly in their learning. There is little difference between the performance of boys and girls. The proportion of boys reaching a good level of development is much higher than that seen nationally. Disadvantaged children have not done as well as their classmates in the past but there is no difference between the performance of the very small number of disadvantaged children this year and their classmates.
- The welfare requirements in the early years are met. Staff ensure that children are safe indoors and outdoors.
- Staff work closely with parents to ensure that children settle into learning as quickly as possible. They provide a range of workshops, some at parents' request, to help parents understand what and how their children are learning. There are regular 'stay and play' sessions and parents make entries in their child's 'proud book' to share achievements out of school with staff.

School details

Unique reference number	138252
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	10012074

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Narinder Thaper
Principal	Michelle Long
Telephone number	01274 424 350
Website	http://www.dixonsmp.com
Email address	admin@dixonsmp.com
Date of previous inspection	13–14 May 2014

Information about this school

- This two-form entry primary is a free school and forms part of the Dixons' Academies Trust. It has a specialism in music and serves the whole of Bradford. The school reserves a small number of places for pupils demonstrating musical aptitude.
- The school opened in September 2012 and currently has pupils in the Reception Year and Years 1 to 3. It will grow to full capacity in 2018. Consequently, there are no Year 6 standardised test results to compare with the national floor standards.
- Children in the Reception class attend full-time.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and support through pupil premium funding is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support disadvantaged pupils and those looked after by the local authority.
- The majority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, with the biggest single group being of Pakistani heritage. An above-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- An average proportion of pupils receive additional support to meet their special educational needs or disability. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is also average.
- The school runs a breakfast club which is managed by the governing body.
- The school operates in a building shared with its partner secondary school.
- The school's website meets requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in all classes with the principal or vice-principal. Together with senior and middle leaders, she reviewed the work in pupils' books. She listened to a number of pupils read and talked to some pupils informally about their work and school life.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. She had lunch with the school council as part of family dining, observed breakfast club and attended a 'singing' assembly.
- The inspector held discussions with the principal, senior and middle leaders, the business manager and members of the local governing body. She spoke by telephone with the school's adviser at the Department for Education.
- Fourteen responses to the staff questionnaire and 43 responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account.
- The inspector analysed a range of information, including the school's evaluation of its own performance; the minutes of governing body meetings; examples of the school's teacher tracker; and information on pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. She also considered systems for safeguarding pupils.

Inspection team

Jane Austin, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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