

Inspection of Mallard Primary School

Cedar Road, Balby, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN4 9HU

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
The quality of education	Inadequate
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Inadequate
Early years provision	Inadequate
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's expectations of pupils' achievement have been too low for too long. The quality of education that pupils receive is weak. The school has not been effective in ensuring that staff have the expertise that they need to help pupils to build a secure body of knowledge across different subjects. As a result, children in the early years through to pupils in Year 6 do not achieve well. They are ill-prepared for the next stage of their education.

Recently, the school's expectations of pupils' behaviour have increased. Typically, pupils are beginning to meet these expectations. They walk calmly through school. They show respect to other pupils and adults. Pupils feel safe. They are confident that adults will listen to, and deal with, their concerns. In the early years, children are taught to follow the school rules and to show positive learning behaviours. Pupils across the school usually behave well in lessons. However, some pupils, especially pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are too reliant on adult support to engage with their learning.

Pupils are beginning to experience a wider array of clubs, educational visits and other activities. The school has recently developed a broader range of opportunities to enhance pupils' wider development. For example, pupils represent the school at sporting or musical events. Even so, pupils' understanding of fundamental British values and other world faiths is underdeveloped.

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

Considerable turbulence in leadership and staffing, coupled with weaknesses in governance, have led to a decline in the quality of education over time. The school does not have the capacity that is needed to tackle its shortcomings. It is heavily reliant on external support to bring about necessary change.

Governors know what is expected of them in their roles, but they have not had the training that they need to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. While governors meet their duties to safeguard pupils, they do not have sufficient oversight of the school's work. As a result, they are unaware of some of the significant weaknesses in the school. Governors has not acted quickly enough to stem the decline in pupils' achievement.

The school has designed a suitable curriculum that meets the requirements of the national curriculum. In a few subjects, the curriculum is taught well. However, this is not true for many other subjects, including reading and mathematics. The school has not ensured that staff, including those in the early years, have sufficient understanding of how to deliver most subject curriculums effectively. The checks that staff make on pupils' learning do not identify gaps in their knowledge well enough. As a result, pupils find it difficult to build on and retain knowledge from what they have been previously taught. They do not learn as well as they should.

The school does not have appropriate systems in place to accurately check how well subjects are taught. The leadership of most subjects is underdeveloped. This means that the school is not alert to the weaknesses in curriculum delivery that are having a negative impact on pupils' achievement. This is the case for children in the early years as well as in key stages 1 and 2.

Pupils with SEND do not have their needs identified quickly enough. They do not receive the support that they need to be successful in their learning. This is also true for children with SEND in the early years. Staff have not received the guidance that they need to adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' needs. The parents and carers of pupils with SEND hold mixed views about the school. While some have more positive opinions, many expressed their frustration about a lack of support for their children with SEND.

The school has ensured that there is a clear phonics programme in place. Staff have recently received training on the school's approach to phonics. However, the impact of this training is mixed. Some pupils are not supported well enough to read words that contain the sounds that they have learned. The school has begun to identify some pupils who need help with reading. Even so, the support that they receive is not making enough difference to closing the gaps in their reading knowledge. Consequently, many pupils do not become fluent readers.

The school's offer to promote pupils' personal development enables them to learn about important aspects, such as staying safe online and understanding healthy relationships. Due to some recent improvements, there are some opportunities for pupils to have responsibilities, for example as playtime leaders and school councillors. Pupils are taught about fundamental British values and the differences between people in society. However, they do not develop a secure understanding of these topics. This is because of weaknesses in how the curriculum is delivered.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons is typically positive. However, some pupils, including pupils with SEND, do not approach their learning with enthusiasm or determination. In some cases, pupils are over-reliant on adult support. This is usually because their learning needs are not understood or met. The support that pupils receive in lessons does not help them to become independent learners. Many pupils do not attend school often enough. The school has recently introduced systems to identify and support those pupils with low attendance rates. As a result, attendance is beginning to improve.

Staff feel well supported by the school. However, the school has not done enough to help staff to be successful in their roles. Staff are keen for the school to improve, although they recognise that some recent changes have increased their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The phonics programme does not ensure that pupils learn to read fluently or quickly. Pupils do not learn how to use the sounds that they know to read unfamiliar words. Those pupils who find reading difficult do not get the support that they need to catch up. As a result, pupils do not gain the knowledge that they need to read successfully. This limits their access to other curriculum areas. The school must ensure that the early reading programme enables pupils to gain a solid foundation on which to build their reading knowledge.
- The school does not identify the needs of pupils with SEND quickly and accurately. The support that these pupils receive is not matched to their needs. They underachieve considerably. The school should ensure that pupils' needs are identified and that staff are well equipped to adapt the curriculum so that pupils with SEND learn all that they should.
- The school has not ensured that staff, including those in the early years, have the knowledge and expertise that they need to deliver many curriculum subjects. Staff are ill-equipped to check what pupils know and can do. This means that pupils do not build a secure body of knowledge over time. It leads to gaps in their learning and understanding. The school must ensure that staff are well-informed and suitably guided to teach and assess the curriculum as intended.
- Over time, the quality of education at the school has declined. Pupils, especially pupils with SEND, underachieve. The school, including the governing body, does not have the capacity to tackle the current weaknesses at pace. The governing body and the school must strengthen leadership capacity at all levels so that improvements are rapid and sustainable.
- Governors do not have oversight or understanding of the quality of education that pupils receive. They have not offered the required challenge or support to stem the decline at the school. The governing body must ensure that it has the knowledge and expertise to support the school to bring about the necessary changes.
- The leadership of most subjects is underdeveloped. The school has not ensured that there are systems to check the delivery of the curriculum or the impact that this has on pupils' achievement. As a result, the school is not able to identify where weaknesses exist or take action to bring about improvement. The school should make sure that it has the necessary information about curriculum delivery so that weaknesses can be remedied.
- Some pupils, including pupils with SEND, are not enthusiastic learners. They rely on adults too much. At times, this is because learning does not meet their needs. This limits their independence and readiness to persevere when they face challenges. The strategies to support pupils in lessons do not build their resilience. The school should ensure that pupils are supported to become resilient and independent learners.
- Pupils have a limited understanding of some fundamental British values and other world faiths. This is because this aspect of the curriculum is not taught well. This

means that pupils are not as prepared as they could be for life beyond the school. The school should ensure that pupils build their knowledge of modern society securely so that they are better prepared for life in modern Britain.

The school may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection. The position regarding the appointment of early career teachers will be considered again during any monitoring inspection we carry out.

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	134235
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10323013
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	361
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ian Smith
Headteacher	Kerry Sutcliffe
Website	www.mallardprimaryschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 July 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last monitoring visit in July 2023, there have been two executive headteachers and a new head of school.
- The head of school was appointed in September 2024.
- The chair of governors is new in post since the last inspection.
- The school uses two registered alternative provisions for a small number of pupils.
- The school has an executive headteacher who is being provided through a local academy trust in agreement with the local authority.

Information about this inspection

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school’s education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke to the head of school, the assistant headteacher and other senior leaders.
- Inspectors spoke to the chair of the governing body and other governors.
- Inspectors spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and religious education. 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.
- Inspectors also considered pupils’ learning in some other curriculum subjects.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a familiar adult.
- 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 children’s interests first.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents relating to behaviour, attendance and governance, as well as leaders’ self-evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the results of Ofsted’s staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted’s pupil survey.

Inspection team

Liam Colclough, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Zoe Helman

His Majesty’s Inspector

Mel Garlick

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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