

Acres Hill Community Primary School

Mather Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S9 4GQ

Inspection dates 8–9 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' progress as they move through the school is too variable so they do not always achieve well in each key stage and in all subjects.
- Teaching, although good in a number of classes, is not of this quality across the school.
- Improvements in pupils' progress in writing have not kept pace with those in reading.
- Higher-attaining pupils are not always challenged to make good progress.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching regularly but their evaluation does not always focus sharply enough on the impact of teaching on the progress of different groups of learners in the class.
- Planned actions, targets and timescales in the school development plan do not reflect aspirations for good achievement and rapid school improvement.
- Governors have not been sufficiently robust in challenging school leaders about the school's performance.

The school has the following strengths

- The school provides a welcoming and safe environment. All pupils are well cared for, valued and supported.
- Good practice is most evident in the teaching of reading across the school.
- Pupils behave well and show respect for each other and adults.
- The school has embraced the increasing cultural diversity of its pupils. Those joining the school other than at the usual time settle quickly.
- The range of subjects taught and breadth of other experiences provided by the school promote pupils' social, moral, cultural and spiritual education well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 part lessons, two jointly with senior leaders, and made a series of shorter lesson visits to observe the teaching of phonics and other small group sessions.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils from Year 4, 5 and 6 and talked informally to pupils around school and in the playground.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher and other leaders, the vice-chair and another representative of the governing body and representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors analysed data relating to pupils' attainment, progress and attendance. They also reviewed a range of other documents including those related to safeguarding, pupils' behaviour and records from the school's monitoring of its work.
- Inspectors considered the 30 responses to the on-line questionnaire 'Parent View', correspondence received by the inspection team and the school's recent survey of the views of parents and carers. The lead inspector also spoke to a number of parents individually.
- Inspectors scrutinised samples of pupils' work across different year groups and in a range of subjects.

Inspection team

Katrina Gueli, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lee Owston	Her Majesty's Inspector
Edward Price	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Acres Hill is an average-sized primary school although the number of pupils on roll is increasing over time.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children of service families or those looked after by the local authority) is broadly average but increasing.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is broadly average overall but higher in the younger classes and increasing. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average and many pupils who have joined the school recently are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher currently has an additional role supporting another primary school in the local authority.
- Half the teaching staff are new to the school since the last inspection including two newly qualified teachers who joined in September 2013.
- A proposal has recently been put forward by the local authority to temporarily increase the number of pupil places in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so it is consistently good or better in all classes by:
 - ensuring teachers take account of pupils' prior learning and abilities when planning work in all subjects so the needs of different pupils in the class are well met, especially the higher-attaining pupils
 - ensure teaching reflects the high expectations for pupils' learning needed to secure good achievement
 - improve the marking and written feedback pupils receive so they are well placed to improve their work and make better progress.
- Increase the proportion of pupils exceeding the attainment expectations for their age in all year groups by:
 - setting pupils challenging targets and improving the marking and written feedback they receive so they are well placed to improve their work and make better progress
 - improving progression in pupils' writing and mathematical skills as they move through the school
 - ensuring activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage that children choose for themselves contribute more effectively to their good learning and progress.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management and governance across the school by:
 - increasing the rigour of monitoring and evaluation and ensure judgements about the quality of teaching reflect its impact on the learning and progress of different groups of pupils
 - refine systems to track pupils' progress to ensure leaders, teachers and governors have a clear

picture of whether all groups of pupils are on track to achieve well

- sharpening development planning so actions to bring about improvement are clearly defined and timescales for securing improvement reflect a determination to tackle priorities quickly
- take rapid and effective action to ensure the quality of teaching and the progress of all pupils at least matches the best currently in the school carrying out an external review of governance in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance can be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' progress varies too widely as they move through the school. Although good in some classes, key stages and subjects this is not a consistent picture over time. The key factor underpinning this is the variation in quality of teaching pupils experience in different classes. School data from the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress and pupils' work reflect this difference.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are below those expected for their age, particularly in communication and language. Those children leaving Reception in 2012 reached a good level of development across the different learning goals and were well prepared for their transition into Key Stage 1. This was not the case for children who left Reception in 2013 because their progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage required improvement rather than being good. As a result, they were not as ready for Year 1 because their skills in literacy, mathematics, and communication and language were still below those expected for their age.
- At Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils reaching the level typically expected for their age declined in 2013, reflecting uneven rates of progress during Years 1 and 2. No pupils reached the higher Level 3 in reading, writing or mathematics in two out of the last three years.
- At Key Stage 2, the good progress evident in mathematics in 2011 was not sustained in 2012. However, outcomes for 2013 show the proportion of pupils making expected and better than expected progress in reading and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 has improved to be broadly in line with the national average. This represents good progress in these two subjects during Key Stage 2.
- In 2013, the proportion of pupils making better than expected progress in writing between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 was below the national average; school data suggest this picture will be similar in 2014. As a result, pupils' progress in writing requires improvement.
- Higher-attaining pupils are not always provided with sufficient challenge to enable them to achieve well.
- Pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium funding typically make similar or better progress than other pupils in their class because extra targeted teaching helps to accelerate their progress. The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the funding in Year 6 in 2013 was very small so it is not possible to judge whether gaps in attainment are narrowing over time.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their peers in each class because most teachers plan carefully for their learning and additional support is extensive and closely matched to their needs.
- Minority ethnic pupils who are at an early stage of learning English are quickly helped to gain skills and confidence in speaking and writing English so they are able to access the full curriculum. As with other pupils, the overall progress made by minority ethnic pupils during a school year is dependent on the quality of whole-class teaching.
- A strong focus on the teaching of reading is ensuring pupils make the best progress in this subject. The number of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check more than doubled in 2013 compared with 2012 and was above the latest published national figure. Many are keen readers and enjoy talking about the books they have read and their favourite authors.
- The school has used new government primary school sport funding to appoint two 'physical education apprentices'. These members of staff have brought valuable subject expertise but it is too soon to judge their impact on improving provision, pupils' participation or their well-being.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Changes to staffing and unavoidable absences have led to a decline in the quality of teaching over time since the last inspection. Although there is good quality teaching in each key stage there is also that which requires improvement. This is preventing too many pupils from making consistently good progress.
- Where teaching requires improvement learning sometimes lacks pace and pupils become passive or drift off-task. On other occasions, although lesson activities are usually closely matched to the needs of lower-ability pupils or those with special educational needs, they are not sufficiently tailored to extend and challenge pupils with higher levels of prior attainment so their progress is not good.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are not always supported to make good progress because activities they are able to choose for themselves are not planned in sufficient detail or with a clear focus on the intended learning. In contrast, teacher-directed activities promote learning more successfully.
- Discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their work confirm that the school has rightly identified the need to develop the use of targets and written feedback to help pupils improve their work and make more rapid progress.
- Samples of work indicate that some guidance pupils receive in lessons to help them complete a piece of writing does not set out clearly what they need to do to make rapid progress relative to their starting points. Similarly in mathematics lessons in upper Key Stage 2, all pupils are sometimes expected to use the same calculation method, so higher-attaining pupils have less opportunity to practice using other, more efficient ways to work out the answer, even when they can do so.
- Where teaching is good, teachers skilfully use information about pupils' prior learning to inform their planning and work is well matched to the needs of different pupils within the group. Successful learning is clearly modelled and pupils' understanding is carefully checked at regular intervals during the lesson to see if teaching needs to be adjusted. As a result, pupils are motivated to learn and make good gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Small-group and one-to-one teaching for pupils most at risk of underachievement are effectively helping to accelerate pupil performance by addressing individual barriers to learning and filling gaps in pupils' knowledge or understanding.
- Phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) and early reading are taught well. The use of small groups allows learning to be precisely tailored to the needs of each pupil and active, fast-paced activities hold their interest and reinforce learning in an enjoyable way.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are polite and courteous towards adults and each other. The school is a harmonious community where pupils typically play and get on well together, respecting each other's differences. Younger children quickly learn how to share and take turns.
- In lessons pupils are keen to learn, answer questions and discuss their ideas with a partner. However, attitudes to learning sometimes become a little less positive when teaching is not good.
- Pupils said that at playtime behaviour can be a little boisterous, especially that of those involved in games of football.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire 'Parent View' unanimously agreed. Parents are also very positive about their child's enjoyment of school.
- Pupils say bullying sometimes does happen but staff address their concerns quickly so issues are resolved. They develop a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet in school and at home, and of risks posed by prejudice-based or cyber bullying.
- The small minority of pupils who have difficulty meeting the school's expectations for behaviour

are well supported.

- Attendance has improved considerably since the last inspection as a result of effective work with pupils and their families and an increasingly tough stance on unnecessary absence, such as term time holidays.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Despite leaders' commitment to sustain good quality teaching and good progress for all pupils since the last inspection this has not been realised. The challenges of staffing instability and disappointing teacher performance have been tackled but, nevertheless, have resulted in pupils experiencing teaching that is not consistently good.
- Monitoring of the school's work enables leaders to gather a broad range of evidence to evaluate performance. However, some judgements about the quality of teaching do not place enough emphasis on evaluating its impact on pupils' progress, including for different groups of pupils.
- Pupils' attainment and progress are checked regularly and teachers are held to account for the achievement of those in their class. However, not all data used to track pupils' progress take account of measures of at least expected or better than expected progress so the picture of whether pupils are on track to achieve well is not consistently clear.
- The school monitors the performance of particular groups of pupils, including minority ethnic pupils and those with disabilities or special educational needs. The progress of those with differing levels of prior attainment is not regularly included in this analysis so their progress is not checked so carefully.
- Areas for development relating to the school's work have been identified by leaders' evaluations and incorporated into a plan. Actions to be taken are identified but do not detail clearly what must be done and timescales do not reflect the need for urgent improvement. Targets for pupils' progress do not reflect leaders' aspirations for good achievement.
- Teachers confirm that targets set for performance management are challenging and supportive of their development needs. School leaders have taken effective action to tackle staff underperformance.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a broad and varied range of in-class and 'beyond the classroom' learning experiences that contribute well to their social, moral, cultural and spiritual development. Themed days and topic work provide pupils with good opportunities to make links between learning in different subjects and practise their literacy and numeracy skills in another context. However, topic work is often not tailored to the needs of different ability groups in the class, limiting opportunities for all pupils to make good progress.
- Leaders are strongly committed to the promotion of equality and diversity across the school. They are keen to ensure every child feels included and has a successful learning experience. Leaders and other staff work extensively with pupils, parents and external partners to secure this.
- The care and support provided to those pupils with the most complex social, emotional or learning needs are well coordinated and effective.
- The school works hard to maintain good working relationships with parents. For example, 'morning work' each day provides an opportunity to come into the classroom and observe or support their child's learning. Regular workshops help parents to improve their understanding of how they can support their child's learning at home.
- The school has received 'light touch' support from the local authority since its last inspection. Challenge for leaders, regarding aspects of the school's performance that are more variable, has been limited. In addition, school leaders feel that at times, the response of the local authority to school issues has not been swift enough.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are very supportive of the school and have a broad understanding of some of its strengths and weaknesses. They take appropriate action to manage the headteacher's performance. Governors have attended a range of training to develop their skills and also take time to see the school 'at work' so they are better placed to make informed decisions. However, a number of governors are relatively new so are still developing their effectiveness in the role. While governors ask probing questions about how variations in teaching are being addressed, they do not challenge the school sufficiently about pupils' performance. In part, this is because data presented do not give a full picture so they are not well placed to monitor trends or make comparisons with expectations for good achievement. They have a limited understanding of how the pupil premium funding has been spent or its impact on the progress of pupils it is intended to support.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	107063
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	427309

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	273
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Abid Rahim
Headteacher	Lee Garbutt
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2011
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