

# Dame Catherine Harpur's School

Rose Lane, Ticknall, Derby, DE73 7JW

**Inspection dates** 17–19 March 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Leadership and management	Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings

### This is an inadequate school

- School leaders, including the proprietor, have not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met. This is because their roles and responsibilities are not clear and, therefore, they have not carried out checks relating to safeguarding the welfare of pupils.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is inadequate because the fire risk assessment has not been updated as it should be. Fire alarm and emergency lighting systems have not been regularly checked.
- The school does not provide up-to-date information for parents on its website about its safeguarding policy. It has not made all the required checks on the suitability of staff.
- School leaders do not have an accurate view of the school's own strengths and weaknesses. Improvement planning is not systematic. There is limited evaluation of how any new initiatives are raising standards.
- Governors do not provide sufficient challenge and support to school leaders. The headteacher and other staff are not held to account for pupils' achievements, because performance management is not focused on this.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching are not fully effective because these are not linked to measures of pupils' progress.
- The early years provision is inadequate because the standards not met regarding welfare and safety also affect this provision.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils throughout the school make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, with many achieving high standards. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Teaching is consistently good, including in the early years. Staff create a stimulating and exciting environment which inspires pupils to try their best.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Caring and supportive relationships are a particular feature of the whole school community. Pupils are very happy, polite and have very positive attitudes to learning.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed learning in all classes including the early years provision. He also examined the pupils' work in books and around the school.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, staff and pupils, including the school council.
- The inspector examined a range of school documentation including: policies and records about how the school was keeping pupils safe; information about pupils' behaviour and their learning, progress and achievement; and the school's evaluation of its strengths and its priorities for improvement. He also looked at minutes of governing body meetings.
- Nineteen responses to the Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were considered, along with the nine staff questionnaires, which had also been returned. Parents were also talked with as they collected or dropped off their children.

## Inspection team

Stephen Daniels, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Dame Catherine Harpur's School is a small independent primary school located in the village of Ticknall in south Derbyshire. It opened in 1987 and is managed by a governing body, known as the senior management team. Members include the headteacher, parent representatives and independent trustees from the local community.
- The school is registered as a limited company and has charitable trust status.
- Almost all pupils are White British and a few are of Asian heritage.
- At present, there are 38 pupils on roll. There is a nursery class with nine children, all of whom attend part time. There are two other classes: a Reception and Key Stage 1 class with 14 pupils, four of whom attend part time and a Key Stage 2 class with 15 pupils.
- No pupil has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school aims to provide 'a child-centred education in which pupils are supported to develop at their own pace through a personalised approach to learning'. The curriculum emphasises the importance of 'learning by doing' and encouraging pupils to develop personal responsibility and self-discipline.
- The school uses local public facilities for sports and games and all pupils have a weekly timetabled swimming lesson at a local school's pool.
- The school was previously inspected in November 2011.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that all the independent school standards are met
  - putting systems into place that identify clearly who will check that the school's policies and practices are implemented effectively and updated as required, including those related to fire safety and the suitability of staff
  - ensuring that the required fire risk assessments and checks relating to fire safety are made as often as they should be and that these are recorded appropriately
  - reviewing the function, roles and responsibilities of the senior management team so that all the statutory responsibilities of a proprietorial body are carried out
  - putting into place regular checks on the performance, of the headteacher and other staff, that provide challenge and support and hold them accountable for improving pupils' progress further.
- Improve teaching and raise achievement in English and mathematics by:
  - ensuring teachers always check rigorously that pupils understand what they are learning before they move onto new topics or other work that builds on it.

### The school must meet the following independent school standards

- Ensure all the requirements to keep children safe are implemented effectively (paragraphs, 7, 7(a) and 7(b)).
- Ensure full compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (paragraph 12).
- Ensure compliance with the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 (paragraph 18 (2)(b)).
- Ensure that a compliant safeguarding policy is published on the school's website (paragraph 32(1)(c)).
- Ensure that leaders have sufficient skills, knowledge and understanding to make sure that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraphs 34(1), 34 (1)(a), 34 (1)(b) and 34(1) (c)).

---

**The school must comply with the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

- Ensure that leaders are aware of any worker who may be disqualified (by association) because they live in the same household as another person who is disqualified, or because they live in the same household where a disqualified person is employed (paragraph 3.15).
- Ensure compliance with fire safety requirements (paragraph 3.54).
- Ensure that fire detection and control equipment is in working order (paragraph 3.55).

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leaders' evaluations of the strengths and areas for school improvement are weak and have not been updated for some time. The proprietors do not ensure that the school meets all the independent school standards. There is no clear planning to check that these continue to be met or how to raise the school's standards further.
- The proprietorial board and the school leadership team have not ensured that all of the requirements regarding keeping children safe are met. Staff demonstrate a care and concern for pupils' well-being. Nevertheless, not all the checks that should be carried out on the premises have been, or the staff provided with the relevant information about safeguarding requirements.
- While the school's safeguarding policy is up to date, it was not published on its website as required at the time of the inspection. The school has accurate records of staff safeguarding training and its single central register had all the information about checks on the suitability of staff that it should do. However, leaders were not aware of the requirement to inform staff about their duty of disclosure under the disqualification by association legislation and consequently had not done so. The school does not have suitably robust systems and procedures to make sure that its practices are regularly checked and updated.
- The school carries out emergency practice fire evacuations, fire extinguisher checks and regular tests of electrical equipment. However, other checks linked to fire safety, such as alarm and emergency lighting checks and an annual fire risk assessment have not been carried out regularly enough or recorded. School leaders were unclear as to how often such checks should take place.
- The school was initially unaware of certain requirements about the arrangements for the use of toilets by pupils and also of the need for an appropriate location for a medical facility. The school was able to rectify these provisions quickly during the inspection and no failure of the relevant standards, therefore, occurred.
- Work sampled by the inspector showed that school's assessments of pupils' achievements are accurate. However, this is not always used effectively by leaders to inform school improvement, including the ways in which they judge how well pupils achieve over time. This weakens school improvement planning, including plans to improve teaching.
- Staff work together very well to develop the curriculum in the different areas of learning and to ensure its appropriateness for each key stage. Pupils are excited by the good learning opportunities that they have and their curiosity and thirst for learning are successfully nurtured. There is a strong emphasis on communication, reading, writing and mathematics which sets pupils up very well for their next steps in education. Careful attention to individuals' needs and the small numbers in each group ensure that there is equal opportunity for all to learn.
- The school's effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision ensures pupils have a good understanding of other faiths and cultures. They show great respect for others whose background or religion is different from their own. The school actively fosters understanding of such issues and does not permit any discrimination.
- Pupils benefit from a good range of enrichment activities that promote tolerance and respect. Pupils show good awareness of British values such as democracy, rights and responsibilities. For example, in their discussions in history they identified how attitudes had changed towards the treatment of poor people in Britain over the last 150 years.
- Proprietors, staff and parents care about the school and are determined to provide all pupils with good educational opportunities and the support they need to learn and be successful in their future lives. This ambition is reflected in the quality of relationships that exist among everyone involved in the life of the school, and significantly enhances pupils' experience at the school.

**■ The governance of the school:**

The governance of the school is inadequate. Although the senior management team shows good support for the school and has a broad range of relevant expertise, governors have not ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards, particularly those relating to the pupils' safety. Those responsible for governance are not sufficiently aware of the school's strengths and areas that need further development. This slows the school's improvement.

Governors know about the quality of teaching in the school and they use available information on the school's performance to ask appropriate questions of the headteacher. However, there is no process in place for undertaking the annual performance management of the headteacher, or relating this and staff performance to improvement in standards.

The senior management team keeps a very close eye on finance. This ensures solvency and probity are maintained and that the resources made available to the school are managed efficiently in stringent financial circumstances.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils****are inadequate****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is good. Pupils enjoy school and say that they are proud to be part of their school community, which provides them with opportunities to develop into confident and self-assured young people. Attitudes to learning are excellent and have a positive impact on pupils' learning, progress and achievement.
- Behaviour in lessons and around school, including during playtimes and lunchtimes, is good. There is no graffiti or litter and pupils show a respect and care for the school. On the very few occasions when pupils' attention wanders, teachers quickly get them back on track without disrupting the flow of the lesson.
- The school maintains detailed records of the few behaviour incidents that happen. All staff know each pupil extremely well and so are able to provide the care and guidance needed to resolve any issues when they occur. The focus is always on restoring relationships and creating a secure school environment in which pupils are encouraged to flourish.
- Attendance is above average, although occasionally there are minor issues with punctuality.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe is inadequate. This is because the school fails to make sure that all the required safety measures are in place.
- The school does not ensure that all the required safety checks are carried out and so this aspect of its work is inadequate, including for children in the early years provision. Parents feel that the school keeps their children safe from any harm. Those talked with, praise the 'family atmosphere' and feel the school nurtures and looks after pupils well.
- Any form of bullying is rare. Records show that when incidents do occur they are quickly and effectively dealt with by staff. The strong ethos of the school ensures that pupils are effectively taught about the values of respect and tolerance towards others. Pupils understand racism and other forms of discrimination, because teachers discuss such issues through a strong personal, social, health and economic education programme. The school's records confirm that there are no such incidents.
- Pupils are well aware of the importance of taking care when using the internet and understand that they must not disclose personal information. They also know what they would do if they felt they were in any danger. The mixed age group classes encourage pupils to get on with, and learn from, one another. The school is very much like an extended family and pupils said they could go to talk with any member of staff if something was worrying them.

**The quality of teaching****is good.**

- Teaching is well planned and enables pupils to make good progress from their different starting points and achieve well over time.
- The school's aims and values are focused on encouraging pupils to think for themselves. This is developed well because there are many opportunities for pupils to develop their own interests, reflect on their ideas and explore different points of view.
- A strength of much teaching is the way in which it promotes a richer, deeper and fuller understanding of what was being learned, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers' questioning is usually highly effective. Teachers link questions to ensure they probe pupils' understanding of key ideas so that learning is reinforced. Often, such questions elicit mature and perceptive responses from pupils. Occasionally, teachers move onto the next steps of learning too quickly without checking fully that each has understood the work to date.
- The teaching of mathematics is well structured and enables pupils to develop important mathematical ideas systematically. It provides appropriate opportunities for them to consolidate skills and apply their understanding when solving problems. Evidence in the pupils' books indicates that they are regularly asked to demonstrate how they reach their answers in mathematics and can explain their calculations well.
- Pupils benefit from many well-planned opportunities to extend their learning outside the classroom. These often provide teachers with an excellent stimulus for lessons where pupils are eager to share their experiences with one another in an imaginative way. A good example of this was in Key Stage 2, where a visit to a workhouse museum inspired pupils to produce exciting and imaginative creative writing.
- The teaching of reading has been a focus and has improved well since the last inspection. There are now many opportunities for pupils to read in different contexts and subjects and improved resources in each classroom. The teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) is systematic and effective. All this is improving the numbers of pupils who are skilled readers when they leave the school.
- Teaching of the few disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good because of the individual support provided and the careful monitoring of their progress. The small numbers in each class group mean that anyone who does need extra help is quickly identified and support put into place. Similarly, the most able are provided with good extension work that enables them to deepen their thinking or move on rapidly to other work. This was seen in a Key Stage 1 lesson where more-able pupils were set a task of writing their own sentences of more than 12 words.
- Teaching assistants, many of whom are volunteers, are effectively deployed and make a good and important contribution to the quality of teaching at the school. They work seamlessly with teachers and enhance the quality of the teaching. They are skilled in organising the learning of small groups and working with individual pupils in order to support them to improve their reading and writing. They make careful observations of pupils' learning that inform pupils' assessment profiles.
- High expectations are evident in the teaching. In planning learning activities teachers think carefully how they can make each successive task more challenging. This secures rapid progress for example, when pupils explored the relative strengths of suspension bridges compared to beam bridges.
- In general, teachers' marking of pupils' work is regular and detailed and follows the school's policy. Teachers' comments on pupils' work recognise pupils' efforts and identify some of the strengths of the work. However, marking is not consistently good across the school and, therefore, does not always lead to improvements in pupils' work.

## The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well throughout the school because the teaching is usually very

well targeted on next steps for each and teachers know their pupils well. The school uses its own assessment system, based on end-of-year expectations; pupils in this school have never taken the end of Year 2 and 6 national assessments.

- In the early years, the school's records and inspector's observations indicate that pupils make good progress from their different starting points on entry. Most children enter with learning and development that is at least similar to, and sometimes better than, that which is typical for others of their age.
- In Key Stage 1, annual reports contain extensive information about pupils' progress and achievement in all the statutory curriculum areas. These demonstrate clearly to parents the good progress that pupils make. Inspector's observations and scrutiny of work confirm this good achievement and the accuracy of additional teacher assessments linked to National Curriculum statements.
- Standards and rates of progress in reading are good throughout the school, because many opportunities are provided for pupils to read in different subjects. Pupils read well and use their strong phonics skills to read new and unfamiliar words accurately. Overall, the standard of reading is above national expectations.
- The most-able pupils consistently make good and often better progress and achieve highly, because teachers are very focused on ensuring that the work enables them to deepen their understanding further. In particular, pupils demonstrate tenacity and independence in their approach to learning and want to do well.
- Any pupil in danger of falling behind is very quickly identified and the necessary intervention and additional support put in place to help them catch up. During the inspection good examples of this were seen in relation to pupils' reading, spelling and handwriting.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has increased the opportunities for pupils to produce a variety of extended pieces of writing and to develop resilience in doing this. Teaching helps pupils to structure their writing more effectively and evidence in pupils' books indicates that attainment in writing is improving quickly, and is close to the high standards in reading.
- Teachers update parents informally about their children's progress and achievements at school daily. In addition to this, parents receive regular written reports and have the opportunity to discuss their children with staff at individual progress meetings. Most parents feel that the school provides them with all the information they need about their children's education, although a few would like even more. The school is focused on trying to improve the information sharing with parents even more.

### **The early years provision**

### **is inadequate**

- Leadership and management of the early years provision is inadequate because the regulatory failures relating to safety also impact on the early years and put these children at risk.
- The early years leader has created a culture where children are warmly welcomed in the school and so soon feel safe and happy following entry. The teaching area provides a rich and exciting environment that engages the children's imaginations and stimulates their enthusiasm for learning. All adults working there provide good levels of support and act as positive role models. Therefore, children learn how to get on well together and settle quickly into its day-to-day routines.
- Teaching and learning in the early years have developed strongly since the previous inspection so that children's progress and development in all areas of learning are now good. Children make particularly strong progress in communication and language, literacy, mathematical and personal and social development which sets them up very well for their next steps in education, whether in this school or elsewhere.
- Systems for checking on, and recording, children's progress have been improved. These are used well by all staff to document specific learning and development targets for each child. Good systems are in place,



which enable the teacher to share this information with parents.

- Teachers plan very carefully the experiences that children will have available and there are particular strengths in the ways in which their language, early reading, writing and mathematical skills are developed. Their curiosity and creative development are also nurtured well. This means that almost all children reach a good level of development by the end of Reception.
- Children interact well with one another and their teacher and behaviour is consistently good. They show positive attitudes to learning, enjoy the range of different learning activities provided and make good progress. In one lesson, the children were keen to talk about different spiral patterns they had identified in a snail's shell and spinning tops and then demonstrated good physical skills in cutting out, drawing and colouring in their work.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113023
<b>Inspection number</b>	454248
<b>DfE registration number</b>	830/6020

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery and primary school
<b>School status</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	39
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	13
<b>Proprietor</b>	Dame Catherine Harpur's School Foundation
<b>Chair</b>	Malcolm Dawn
<b>Headteacher</b>	Margaret Whyte
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 November 2011
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£3785
<b>Telephone number</b>	01332 862792
<b>Email address</b>	damecatherines@hotmail.com

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our website for news, information and updates at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/user>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2015

