

Sutherland Primary Academy

Beaconsfield Drive, Blurton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST3 3DY

Inspection dates

31 March–1 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Requires improvement 3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement 3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement 3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement 3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement 3
Early years provision		Good 2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Achievement is not good. Too few pupils make more than the progress expected of them from their starting points. Gaps remain in the achievement of girls and boys, and the most able pupils do not always reach their potential.
- Teaching is not consistently good. The needs of differing groups are not always sufficiently taken into account so that some pupils find work too hard and others find it too easy.
- Teachers do not set high enough expectations for what pupils can achieve.
- Marking is not used consistently to precisely show pupils how to improve.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are inconsistent. Some are reluctant to respond to teachers' marking comments that guide them to improve or complete work in their books.
- The academy's evaluation of its performance is too generous.
- Development plans are not always linked precisely to the impact they will have on pupils' achievement and progress.
- Senior leaders, including governors, do not have sufficiently accurate and up-to-date information on pupils' progress and attainment across the school.

The school has the following strengths

- Children have a good start in the early years. They make good progress and achieve well.
- Behaviour is well managed and the school has a friendly, welcoming feel about it.
- Pupils feel safe in school, bullying is rare and most parents are confident that their children are well looked after in this nurturing school.
- The curriculum is interesting and enhanced by many enrichment activities. It effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The care and welfare of pupils are at the heart of the school's work.
- Leaders have been effective in improving the teaching of letters and sounds and raising the standards of reading in the current year.
- The school provides well for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs so that they achieve well.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve as well, and sometimes better, than other pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes and when pupils were working in smaller groups. They listened to pupils read in Years 1, 2 and 6.
- Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books across all year groups. They particularly focused on English, mathematics, science and topic work.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, members of staff, three governors including the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors gained the views of parents from the 29 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire, the 104 responses to the academy's most recent parental questionnaire and from talking to parents attending the Easter concert.
- The views of staff were gained from 54 responses to the staff questionnaire and conversations with individual teachers.
- Inspectors looked at a range of school documents. This included information relating to safeguarding and child protection, development planning, subject planning, tracking information on pupils' progress, performance management systems and procedures for checking on the quality of teaching and learning.

Inspection team

Judith Straw, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Craig Richardson	Additional Inspector
Ben Cox	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sutherland Primary Academy converted to an academy on 1 August 2012. When its predecessor school, Sutherland Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- Sutherland Primary Academy is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- In the early years, children attend the Nursery on a full-time basis.
- Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds and the proportion that comes from minority ethnic backgrounds is very small.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average compared to the national picture.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support is high compared to the national average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children that are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement by:
 - ensuring that teachers always set work at the right level for pupils of all abilities, including the most able pupils, to enable them to make good progress
 - requiring teachers to set higher expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - using strategies to more successfully involve boys in their learning so that the gap between the achievement of girls and boys narrows
 - planning work which requires pupils to consistently apply themselves to learning
 - dealing effectively with occasional low-level disruption
 - improving the consistency of marking and feedback so that all pupils know what they need to do to improve their work and always respond to their teachers' comments.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - sharpening improvement planning by consistently setting precise targets so that the academy can measure the impact of actions taken on pupils' attainment and progress
 - developing more efficient retrieval systems to make up-to-date information on pupils' progress readily available to staff and members of the governing body.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- School leaders are ambitious and want the best for their pupils. However, the effectiveness of leadership and management is not good because leaders do not always have a sufficiently accurate view of the progress and attainment of pupils across the school. Inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching and not enough pupils are making good progress.
- Leaders have built a positive ethos and pupils and staff are proud to belong to the school. Parents are supportive of the school's work. However, not enough is being done to raise attainment and accelerate progress.
- Leaders are too generous in their judgement of the quality of teaching. However, leaders clearly demonstrate their capacity to improve teaching because of the rapid improvement in the teaching of letters and sounds and reading in the current year, together with the steadily improving picture of progress across the school.
- The management of staff performance requires improvement because staff performance targets do not relate to pupils' progress. Some targets lack challenge and are not measureable.
- Middle leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator, the leader of early years and subject leaders are helping to improve teaching so that some pupils are beginning to make good progress. They have had extra training and are much more involved in school improvement than previously.
- Subjects are taught through learning challenges which are designed to develop skills through many different topics. Pupils enjoy the many opportunities for enrichment through sporting, musical, wildlife and film clubs among others. The academy has an international dimension to broaden horizons. Examples of this include the interesting work done on life in modern America and research into the animals found in Kenya.
- The school is successful in promoting British values through its own core values which include respect, tolerance, kindness and honesty. The entrance hall has a welcoming and unequivocal statement: 'We are citizens of Britain.' Debate and discussion are encouraged through personal, social and health education. The subjects taught are effective in promoting pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The academy has used the primary physical education and sport premium funding to very good effect. For example, pupils now participate in many inter-school competitions and almost nine out of ten pupils attend at least one sports club weekly. An innovation this year is the regular assessment of younger children in early years and Key Stage 1 against nine core skills. Those who need extra support while doing physical education are identified and regularly assessed to speed up their progress and fitness levels.
- Good relationships are fostered and discrimination is tackled but, as yet, not all pupils have an equal opportunity to be successful. This is because there remains some underachievement among boys and for high ability pupils.
- The academy provides parents with useful information on their children's progress and offers interesting ways to help them support their children's learning. For example, parents enjoyed and benefited from a recent family reading course held on the school's recently renovated double-decker bus.
- Safeguarding procedures are robust and effective. Arrangements for safe recruitment, child protection, risk assessments and site security are rigorous. Staff are well trained in safeguarding matters.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are ambitious for the school and want to make it the best it can be. They want to increase the life chances of the children in the neighbourhood. Members of the governing body have a wide range of expertise which enables them to discharge their duties with reasonable effectiveness.
 - Governors ensure that safeguarding procedures are robust and effective. They manage the budget effectively and have a sound understanding of how the funding for disadvantaged pupils is used to raise their achievement.
 - The governing body does not have a sufficiently clear, accurate and up-to-date awareness of how well pupils are achieving in the current academic year. Governors have spent a long time looking at why standards dropped and progress was inadequate last year but have not spent enough time checking that there is strong improvement in the current year.
 - Governors receive information about the quality of teaching and know that procedures are in place to make sure effective teaching is rewarded and underperformance is tackled. Governors are fully involved in the performance management of the Principal and monitor the links between salary progression and staff performance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**requires improvement****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Behaviour for learning in classrooms is not good because some pupils do not consistently apply themselves and do not complete enough work in lessons to make good progress.
- In some lessons, pupils are easily distracted so that they in turn distract others. This low-level disruption slows the pace of pupils' learning.
- The work in pupils' books, particularly that of boys, shows that many pieces of work are left incomplete and that pupils do not respond to requests from teachers to complete topics.
- Behaviour around the school is generally good. The inspection took place in the last week of term when concerts were taking place and pupils were excited about the forthcoming holiday but behaviour remained good throughout. Arrangements for playtime on wet days are very well organised so that pupils enjoy activities of their own choice such as origami, drawing and multi-skills sports.
- Pupils appreciate the 'golden rules' and enjoy gaining stamps for good behaviour which contribute to a reward at the end of term.
- Pupils feel safe from bullying. They say that it occurs fairly infrequently and that teachers deal with it well. Bullying is most often related to name-calling about children's appearance. Pupils have heard homophobic language used in a derogatory way; they know that it is wrong and that teachers deal with it. Racist language is very rare and dealt with effectively.
- Pupils are well informed about the rules for using the internet safely.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Robust systems are in place to ensure that all statutory requirements are met and that child protection procedures are rigorously applied.
- The academy works very effectively with a range of external agencies to support pupils and families whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- Attendance is rising steadily and is now average. Exclusions are extremely rare. Leaders use exclusion only in exceptional circumstances.

The quality of teaching**requires improvement**

- Observation of pupils' learning over time, including scrutiny of the work in their books, indicates that the quality of teaching requires improvement because of inconsistency in its quality.
- The work given to pupils does not always stretch them sufficiently and this slows the progress they make. Sometimes teachers are working much harder than their pupils and expectations for the work pupils will complete in lessons are too low. For example, in some books pupils have written just a heading but completed no work below. When the pace of learning is too slow pupils lose interest, do not concentrate and start to chat and distract each other.
- Teachers regularly express concern about behaviour for learning in pupils' books. They ask pupils to complete or add to work but this is not followed through so that many pieces of work remain unfinished. Effective marking is evident in Years 1, 2 and 6 but expectations are not high enough in some other year groups.
- Marking is better in mathematics and English but is not as effective in science and topic work. Feedback to pupils is not used consistently to guide pupils to their precise next steps in learning in order to improve.
- Some teachers use questioning well to extend learning and provide pupils with regular learning challenges. In these instances, pupils respond well. This was evident in Year 6 where pupils were making rapid progress in both mathematics and English. In Year 6 lessons, planning successfully ensures challenge for high ability pupils and a good pace of learning for all pupils.
- The teaching of letters and sounds has improved this year. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have already achieved higher standards than last year and are making good progress.
- Specialist subjects, such as physical education and music, are taught well. Pupils are enthusiastic and make good progress.
- A whole-school focus on improving attainment in reading is proving effective this year so that progress is

faster and more pupils are reaching the expected standard.

- Teaching assistants are well briefed and make a strong contribution to the learning of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. These pupils are making good progress.
- Teaching in the early years setting is good. This is evident from the progress seen in children's work. Children make good progress in their learning because teachers regularly check their understanding and move onto new topics quickly. Children enjoy their learning and concentrate well.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement at the end of Year 6 in 2014 was inadequate. From their different starting points, the proportion of pupils making the progress expected of them in reading and mathematics was significantly below average. The proportions exceeding the progress expected were well below national figures in reading, writing and mathematics. In the current academic year, progress is stronger but not enough pupils are yet making good progress and so achievement requires improvement.
- Pupils enjoy reading and are responding well to the strategies to promote reading this year. There are some fine displays of favourite books such as *The Borrowers*. Reviews of favourite reading by both staff and pupils are on display. Pupils read regularly and all pupils have up-to-date reading records showing much better progress. The academy fosters enjoyment in reading in many ways so that attainment is rising.
- Attainment in writing and mathematics is broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1. There has been a steady rise in attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 since the academy opened. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils did well in the first year of the academy but attainment fell and progress halted in the second year in reading and mathematics, as shown in the 2014 results. Fewer pupils than found nationally achieved the higher Level 5 in 2014 and attainment in spelling, grammar and punctuation was significantly below average. Boys did less well than girls.
- Progress in mathematics is slowly improving. Pupils are responding well to the requirement to understand fewer topics but in much greater depth.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making better progress than other pupils from their different starting points and are achieving well. Their needs are well met. Teaching assistants and class teachers provide the right amount of extra support for their learning.
- The most-able pupils are not always given work that stretches them to do their best and this limits their progress at times. However, more pupils are working at the higher Level 5 this year in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The funding for disadvantaged pupils has been used to provide small group and individual support to improve literacy and numeracy skills. In 2014, these pupils matched the performance of others in school in mathematics and reading but were behind in writing by five months. Disadvantaged pupils were behind all other pupils nationally by seven months in mathematics and 16 months in reading and writing. In the current Year 6, disadvantaged pupils are doing well and are achieving standards above others in their year. These pupils are making good progress compared to others in school and nationally.
- Children in the early years are making good progress from their skill levels on entry and achieving well.

The early years provision

is good

- Most children start in the Nursery with weak skills and abilities in almost all areas of learning which are consistently below those typical for their age. Children settle quickly into the stimulating and supportive environment and soon begin to make progress. By the time they enter Year 1, although children are still below what is expected for their age, especially in reading and numeracy, tracking shows that they have made good progress and are able to access Year 1 work. Girls make stronger progress than boys.
- Teaching is good because learning is well planned so that the needs of children of all abilities are met. Adults rapidly assess learning and adjust their teaching to take children quickly on to the next steps. This was evident in sessions on letters and sounds and in the progress in writing seen in children's work.
- Good use is made of the outside areas to stimulate children's imagination and natural curiosity to encourage them to explore learning in depth and to develop their social and communication skills. Adults use questioning effectively to help children communicate well.
- Children have a good sense of right and wrong and are keen to behave well. They are given clear routines to follow enabling them to settle quickly into school life. They show good levels of cooperation with adults

and other children.

- Links with parents are good. Parents are encouraged to involve themselves in their children's learning and progress from the outset. Children take home reading books, word lists and diaries.
- Children are safe and secure in the early years setting.
- Good leadership is ensuring that children are grouped so that their needs are catered for and that progress is rising steadily. The impact of the good start children make in the early years is seen in the steadily rising attainment of pupils at the end of Year 1.

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	138548
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	456300

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	507
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kathy Niblett
Principal	Garry Boote
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
Telephone number	01782 233977
Fax number	01782 233980
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