

Darley Churchtown CofE Primary School

Church Road, Darley Dale, Matlock, DE4 2GL

Inspection dates 4–5 June 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Instabilities in the leadership since the last inspection meant that the school slipped back from its previous high standards. Pupils' progress slowed until recently and behaviour deteriorated.
- Not enough pupils make good progress from their starting points and particularly the most-able. Too few pupils achieve the higher levels at Key Stage 1 and at Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school did not have reliable information on which to base targets for pupils until recently. Teachers' expectations of what pupils could achieve were not high enough.
- Staffing levels in early years do not allow children's learning and language to be extended as they move around the classroom and playground. This limits their progress in some areas of learning such as technology and creative arts and design.
- Staff have had little training to help them manage the behaviour of pupils who have behavioural needs. Some staff have not routinely followed the school's behaviour policy when incidents occurred. Although this has improved, a very few parents report that their children do not always feel safe.
- Subject leaders have had little role in checking on how well pupils were doing in their subjects until recently and so could not plan effectively for improvement.
- The teaching of phonics is inconsistent. Sometimes staff pronounce the letter sounds incorrectly. Too many pupils do not achieve the expected levels in the Year 1 phonics check.
- Staff do not consistently apply the school's agreed approach to spelling, marking and to homework. Some pupils do not improve their spelling skills quickly enough. Homework is not always marked or well matched to pupils' abilities.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher ably supported by governors, has transformed the school's ethos, and is implementing rapid improvement in teaching and achievement.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils are proud of their school, sensitive to each other's needs and those of people in other countries or of different faiths.
- Progress has already improved so that more pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, will make good progress this year and almost everyone will make expected progress in English and mathematics.
- Pupils who have disabilities and special educational needs make good progress from their starting points and are included well in everything that the school does.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning in all parts of the school, accompanied by the headteacher, as well as making short visits to classrooms to look further at the range of activities and work pupils did and their enthusiasm for these.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher and her leadership team, including subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. The inspector also talked with five members of the governing body and with the local authority school's improvement adviser.
- The inspector examined a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, minutes of the governing body and its development planning. A range of other documentation was also looked at, including those related to how the school keeps pupils' safe, how it checks on and evaluates pupils' progress and records relating to pupils' behaviour,
- The inspector talked with parents as they dropped off or collected their children to ascertain parents' views, as well as analysing twenty-eight responses to Parent View, the online government survey. She also considered six questionnaires completed by staff. She talked with pupils individually and in groups in order to establish pupils' views, including their views as to behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Susan Lewis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in three classes. Reception and Year 1 are taught together in Class 1. Class 2 comprises pupils within Years 2 and 3. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are taught within Class 3.
- The school has a higher than usual number of pupils who join at times other than the beginning of the school year; for example, sixteen, just under a fifth of the current roll, have joined classes throughout the school during this school year. The size of year groups varies from seven to 19 pupils.
- All children within the early years provision attend full-time.
- Nearly all the pupils are of White British heritage. Every pupil speaks English as their first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium, is broadly similar to that found nationally. This funding provides additional support for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above that national average.
- Since the last inspection there has been considerable turbulence in the school leadership. There have been two new headteachers and three executive headteachers who took over at different times when one headteacher left due to ill health. The current headteacher took up her post in September 2014. The Chair of the Governing Body took up her role in April 2014 and several new members of the governing body have been recruited since then.
- The school reduced to three classes in September 2012 but is due to increase to four classes in September 2015, following building work. This is because of the expansion in numbers for some age groups.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement so that it is consistently good by ensuring that:
 - there are sufficient adults available to support children's learning effectively in early years including when children are engaged in self-chosen activities
 - all pupils makes at least the expected progress from their starting points and a higher proportion make better than expected progress, and particularly in mathematics
 - the most-able pupils across the school have work that challenges them to think even more deeply about topics or to extend their skills further
 - all pupils have more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills in subjects.
- Improve teaching so that is it consistently good by:
 - ensuring teachers continue to improve the ways in which they take into account pupils' current skills and knowledge when setting work for them, including homework
 - marking is used more effectively and in particular to help pupils to understand what is good about their work, as well as what is wrong
 - continuing to allow staff to draw on best practice from outside the school to improve their own teaching
 - making sure that all staff are skilled at supporting pupils' use of letters and sounds for reading and spelling and use best practice to do so
 - middle leaders checking teaching in their subjects or areas of responsibility and on how this impacts on attainment and progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Although the school has experienced difficulties since the last inspection because of instabilities in the leadership and management, this is now good. The new headteacher and the new Chair of the Governing Body have worked tirelessly to address weaknesses in progress and teaching. The actions taken have already had an impact so that progress for almost all groups is now good. Behaviour is now good because the leadership has made clear what is expected. Staff now follow the new behaviour policy consistently so that pupils are clearer about what good behaviour is and what is not.
- Until September the school's gathering of and use of information held about pupils' achievement was underdeveloped. The headteacher has rightly prioritised this and ensures that staff know how to use such information to judge the effectiveness of their teaching. Progress meetings are used very effectively with teachers to keep them focused on both individuals and groups within their classes, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have a disability or have special educational needs.
- The local authority has provided good support for both the new headteacher and for the school, once it became clear that it was struggling to maintain standards. Initially it provided support in identifying executive headteachers to lead the school. It provided a much increased level of support and training for governors and for staff. The headteacher has a mentor and access to other schools and leaders in education have allowed her to raise quickly the level of the staff's skills. This has all helped the headteacher and governors to expedite improvements and to rapidly improve behaviour and progress.
- School leaders, including governors, now have a very accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and well targeted plans to improve its work further. They keep a careful watch on the performance of different groups to ensure that none is disadvantaged or discriminated against. They check carefully that everyone has equal opportunity to be included and to learn and quickly identify any who are not. The pupil premium is used effectively to provide a range of interventions for groups. There are no gaps between pupil premium pupils and others in the school currently. The smallness of cohorts means that it is inappropriate to comment on national gaps.
- Middle leaders had little role until September in monitoring standards or the effectiveness of teaching in their subjects. Joint monitoring of work with the headteacher has ensured that, for example, in mathematics the subject leader has a good understanding of what needs to be done and, particularly, the need to increase the proportion of pupils achieving the highest levels.
- The provision for pupils who have a disability or special educational needs is good. Processes are in place to identify these pupils early and the teacher responsible for monitoring their provision tracks carefully the progress that they make. Good partnership working ensures that appropriate support is in place from external agencies when necessary and their advice is used well. Early years provision is also well led and managed so that this too is improving. Children now have a good start to their education in almost all areas of learning.
- Middle managers are not yet fully involved in guiding others as to effective practice in their subjects or leadership areas and in monitoring the effectiveness of teaching. However, a programme of observations has been agreed for next term.
- The large majority of parents are very satisfied with the school and with the progress their child is making. A few are less pleased with progress and behaviour. Individual parents are quick to say, however, that they recognise that the school is now improving and that they feel so much better informed.
- The sports premium has been put to very good effect and is ensuring that pupils have access to a rich and varied sports programme; for example, pupils gain awards, such as those in gymnastics that the school's own facilities do not allow for. Pupils are quick to say how much they enjoy such opportunities.

- Staff are held to account for the quality of their teaching and pupils' learning through rigorous checks by the leadership. These are linked to progress meetings about every pupil and ensure that challenging targets are set for staff. Additional funding has been found for staff training so that they can learn from 'best practice'. This is enthusing staff and as a result pupils themselves are enthused about the learning experiences they now have. Progress in mathematics, reading and writing has improved rapidly for all groups as a result. It is now good for almost all year groups, although some have had to make up ground lost before this year.
- There is a real 'buzz' and excitement about the school and particularly when pupils are engaged in topic work. The school's new curriculum is good and has many strengths. In particular, it takes good account of pupils' literacy skills so that they have many opportunities to apply and develop these skills further. Opportunities to apply their mathematical skills are not so evident or planned. This is reflected in fewer pupils making good progress in using and applying their mathematical skills.
- The school promotes British values well through assemblies and theme days such as their British Values day. Year 6 pupils talk with enthusiasm about such days and their learning and about how we might all have different life styles but still share the same values.
- All safeguarding requirements are met and are effective. All staff, including the designated safeguarding lead have had appropriate and recent training. Safe recruitment procedures are rigorously followed and appropriate risk assessments and safety checks are in place for the buildings and for activities pupils might undertake.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body relied too heavily previously on information from previous headteachers so that it was not fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, in the past eighteen months it has worked tirelessly with the local authority to ensure that the school can move forward rapidly.
 - The governing body is now very active in checking on how well the school is doing and holding the headteacher and middle leaders to account. They are very clear as to what achievement and the quality of teaching look like currently and what the school must do to achieve.
 - Governors are very committed and many have given unstintingly of their time to help the school to improve, observing lessons, checking on initiatives and on health and safety. They have undertaken training and are fully aware about levels of teachers' performance. They understand the need to ensure good practice in the classroom exists before pay rises are agreed. They oversee the school's finances and the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and for physical education rigorously.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils listen carefully in lessons and take great care with the presentation of their work. Their good attitudes to learning mean even when they find the work too easy and finish it quickly they do not disturb others. If the marking asks them to improve their work they quickly settle to do this. However, inconsistencies in marking and instances where work is not pitched at the right level of difficulty mean that pupils do not yet make good progress overall.
- Pupils show great respect and tolerance for each other. They instinctively stand back, for example, to ensure that pupils who have physical needs can readily access the whiteboard. They move around the school quietly and safely. In assembly they listen with interest and spontaneously applaud or congratulate each other and are genuinely pleased to hear about their friends' success.
- During the time that the school had no stable leadership, it is clear that behaviour deteriorated at the school and too many incidents of poor behaviour and occasionally bullying occurred. These have reduced to a very few over the last few terms, because the leadership is ensuring that the behaviour policy is followed and pupils are now very focused on what good behaviour looks like.
- Pupils themselves say that bullying is rare although it did happen in the past. They trust their teachers to

deal with any poor behaviour or bullying that might occur. They say they like being at the school because it is like a 'big family'. A very few parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire did have concerns about bullying and behaviour, although parents spoken to at the school gates indicated they felt there had been a dramatic improvement in both behaviour and progress since the new headteacher took over.

- The inspector agrees that bullying is rare. If poor behaviour does happen it is more consistently dealt with by staff so pupils are clearer as to what is expected.
- Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Good relationships between staff and pupils model tolerance and respect for difference. High quality assemblies and use of themes in the curriculum, as well as fundraising for charities all help prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain and to understand diversity. During the inspection Year 6 travelled to London to visit Parliament, following up their much enjoyed election campaigning for their own 'parties' in school.
- Attendance is broadly similar to that expected nationally. Although it was a little lower last year, this was linked to illness or medical conditions rather than unauthorised absence. Attendance was high during the inspection and pupils said they did not like being away because now they did such interesting things. A few parents indicated that the breakfast club meant that they could get their child to school on time or earlier if they needed to, when their personal circumstances might have made this difficult otherwise.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school is meticulous in ensuring pupils' safety on outings and in the school. All safeguarding requirements are met. Careful attention to staffing in early years ensures children are supervised carefully whether outside or inside the classroom. Older pupils move around the school safely including when they are outside in the playground doing PE.
- There is good attention to helping pupils to understand personal risk, whether linked to internet safety or to when they are out by themselves or with friends. Pupils have good road safety skills and are helped to ride their bicycles safely. Early years children know that they must take care when handling scissors and other equipment.
- The school uses its curriculum well to ensure pupils have a good grasp of different points of view, but are also able to identify when such views might represent extremism. Leaders ensure that pupils are developing a good understanding of British values and traditions and understand what might constitute discriminatory language or behaviour.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because there are still inconsistencies in the ways in which teachers use marking to help pupils to improve their work, but also in the ways in which they teach phonics (the links between letters and sounds) and spelling skills. A few staff still do not have high enough expectations, particularly of the most-able. Pupils themselves say that they find the work too easy at times or that they wish they could learn 'faster'.
- Sometimes teachers are too quick to provide the answers for pupils when they are trying to work out a problem in a group and do not check then that all groups of pupils have understood. However, teachers mostly make good use of questioning to probe and help pupils to deepen their understanding.
- The teaching of writing has improved considerably because of the increased focus on this over the last two years. This is reflected in the good progress most pupils now make in writing throughout the school. Pupils are enthused by the many different opportunities that they have to write through their themes and topics and the most-able write fluently demonstrating a mature use of different styles of writing and vocabulary.
- The teaching of reading is also improving. Guided reading and small group work is systematically strengthening pupils' reading skills including applying their phonics skills. However, not all teachers consistently pronounce these sounds correctly, particularly when helping pupils to spell or when talking

with them about their reading or writing skills informally. This confuses lower achievers who copy such inaccuracies.

- The teaching of mathematics has been strengthened by the introduction of a whole school calculations policy and careful work joint work scrutiny between the subject leader and the headteacher. They recognise that a few higher achievers could be challenged even more in this subject.
- Teaching and learning have been strengthened by the introduction of more effective ways of assessing pupils' progress and new approaches to the curriculum. As a result, teachers and school leaders are better informed about pupils' achievements and work is increasingly well matched to pupils' next steps and needs. Teachers have had the opportunity to attend training courses or to visit other schools to observe best practice. They value such opportunities hugely and have used these effectively to support improvement in their teaching and pupils' enjoyment of their learning.
- Literacy skills are consistently supported across the curriculum. The themes explored and the visits and practical elements all inspire pupils further so that they are keen to write or research, whether about seeds or about different countries of the world. This all supports their achievement well.
- Pupils who have disabilities and special educational needs benefit from the support of experienced teaching assistants and carefully targeted individual planning. Teachers think carefully about how to include them and most are skilled at doing so. Occasionally, where a pupil has challenging behavioural needs staff are not so confident at managing these needs. However, the recent more consistent use of the behaviour policy is improving this, so that pupils have a good understanding of what is acceptable and what not.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Although children enter the early years provision of the school with skills and abilities that are typical of others of their age, the small numbers in each cohort and numbers who join the school in later years mean that the attainment levels of each cohort can vary considerably year on year.
- Since its last inspection, instabilities in the leadership of the school and in the teaching of some classes mean that the progress of pupils who left Darley Churchtown in 2013 and 2014 was not good enough. Too many pupils did not make expected or good progress from their starting points in Year 2 or from when they entered the school. In 2013 and 2014, very few pupils achieved the higher levels they were capable of in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 or Year 2.
- In the Year 1 phonics check, pupils have rarely achieved similar levels to others of their age, despite their starting points being typical. Although this will improve this year, some inconsistencies in the ways in which staff teach these sounds across the school hold pupils back in both their phonics and their spellings work. A few Year 2 and Year 3 pupils, for example, are still struggling with their reading and do not confidently use their knowledge of sounds or sentence structure to help them work out new words and what they mean.
- A whole school calculations policy is improving the fluency and accuracy with which pupils at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 work out their mathematical problems – and indeed their enthusiasm for the subject. Pupils say they enjoy mathematics more now because they are clearer about what they are doing.
- Although the school's focus on writing paid off in 2014, with more pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 making expected progress or better, a few slipped back in reading and did not achieve as much as they could. All pupils in Year 6 made the expected progress in mathematics but very few made better than expected progress. This variability is why, despite recent improvements, achievement is not good.
- The new headteacher has galvanised the school into expecting more. Pupils who are not making good progress are now quickly identified and prompt support is put into place. The school confidently predicts that in 2015 the proportion of Year 6 pupils who will have made good progress since Year 2 is set to increase. A higher proportion will achieve the expected and higher levels in reading and writing and the

expected levels in mathematics. Pupils' work confirms such predictions to be realistic and assessment in general to be accurate throughout the school.

- Achievement is not as high in mathematics because there are few opportunities in other subjects for pupils to apply their mathematical skills. However, a recent focus on this and careful monitoring of how consistently mathematical skills are taught, is beginning to pay off. For example, pupils in Year 5 are in line to achieve even more. The progress all other year groups, including the current Year 2, reflects this improving picture in mathematics and in all other subjects.
- The numbers of disadvantaged pupils are too small for meaningful comparisons with data nationally, particularly when individual pupils' identified needs are taken into account. However, within the school pupils supported by the pupil premium make similar and sometimes better progress than their classmates because the pupil premium money is used for well-targeted interventions that accelerate pupils' progress.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs achieve well because the school works well with others to ensure they have the resources that they need to support their learning. Small group working and strong support from teaching assistants help them to be included and to make good progress both in relation to their academic work and in relation to their other specialist needs.
- The progress of the most-able pupils in each cohort has been variable until recently, because teachers have not always had high enough expectations of their potential achievements. However, the headteacher has ensured that targets set for these pupils are challenging and that staff are now planning more effectively to cater for their needs.
- The primary school sports premium has been used well to improve standards and skills in physical education. For example, all pupils in Key Stage 2 achieved a gymnastics award recently and Years 4 and 5 were completing a bikeability course during the inspection. Younger pupils joined in multi-skills programmes with gusto, listening well and following instructions carefully so that they too could improve their skills.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Early years provision is improving because of good leadership and management by the early years leader and the headteacher and the support from the local authority. This means assessments kept by the school are more detailed and accurately analysed so everyone is clear as to the provision's strengths and individual children's needs. New arrangements are in place for September 2015 to develop this provision further.
- Learning and development in early years requires improvement because not enough children make good progress across all the areas of learning. Children achieve well in their personal and social development and communication, particularly in their speaking and listening skills. This all helps them to improve their reading and writing and mathematical skills well, although a few do not achieve as rapidly in their early sounds work as they should.
- The quality of teaching in early years is good when the whole class are together or children are taught in groups. However, when children are working by themselves, they sometimes have too little attention from adults to help them to develop their play further. This particularly affects their learning when they work on activities they have chosen for themselves, such as in creative arts and design when they paint or in technology, when they construct things or work on the computers. Children often simply repeat something that they have done before or leave work half-finished; sometimes they flit from one activity to another, because they are unsure how to develop their ideas further. As a result, fewer children achieve or exceed levels typical of others of their age in these areas.
- Children behave well in reception, showing good attitudes to their learning; most listen carefully to their teachers. Good arrangements for their transition into the reception class mean that they quickly settle and develop strong trusting relationships with their teachers. Staff work well with parents to share information about their children's progress and to ensure that any who have particular talents and needs have these

recognised as soon as possible.

- All welfare, health and safety requirements are met. Staff are vigilant when children are playing outside or in the classroom to ensure that they are safe.

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	112839
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	449577

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	88
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diane Sloan
Headteacher	Janine Stilwell
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2010
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