

Acres Hill Community Primary School

Mather Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S9 4GQ

Inspection dates

24–25 November 2015

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Achievement throughout the school is inadequate. All pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do not make the progress that they should.
- Mathematics is not taught well. Pupils' understanding of how to apply mathematical skills is muddled.
- Since the last inspection the quality of teaching has deteriorated and pupils' attainment has declined in both key stages.
- Leaders have not checked the progress made by different groups of pupils or the quality of teaching.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough.
- Untidy work is often accepted by teachers and pupils do not always know how to improve their work.
- Leaders, including governors, have not made effective use of the pupil premium funding to ensure that the progress of disadvantaged pupils improves.
- Middle leaders are unable to monitor their areas of responsibility effectively because their skills are underdeveloped.
- Governors have not challenged leaders systematically or checked the quality of provision for themselves.
- Attendance, although improving slightly, is low.

The school has the following strengths

- The new interim headteacher has a clear vision and is moving swiftly to improve the quality of teaching and get the school back on track.
- Staff have responded positively to the very recent changes and are determined to improve their practice.
- More children in the early years are making the progress expected than at the time of the previous inspection.
- Pupils from different backgrounds socialise and play well together and enjoy learning about each other's cultures.

Full report

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better in all classes by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils of all abilities can do in lessons
 - providing work in lessons that is challenging and keeps pupils interested in their learning
 - making sure that the marking and feedback provided for pupils helps them understand how to make their work better
 - ensuring that pupils take pride in their work and always complete tasks to the best of their ability
 - making effective use of teaching assistants so that they provide support and challenge where most needed to pupils of differing abilities
 - ensuring that all teachers use appropriate strategies to manage the behaviour of pupils.
- Rapidly improve all pupils' attainment and progress in all subjects but particularly so in mathematics by:
 - making sure that pupils' skills and knowledge in each area of mathematics are firmly secured
 - ensuring that teachers' subject knowledge is secure in the subjects they teach
 - helping teachers to assess accurately the progress being made by all pupils.
- Work rigorously to ensure that the attendance for all pupils continues to rise and that the proportion who are persistently absent decreases significantly.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders at all levels and of governors, so that they can secure rapid and sustained improvement by:
 - ensuring that the information gathered from the checks made about the quality of teaching enables leaders to provide appropriate training and support for teachers so that their knowledge and skills improve
 - setting ambitious goals for the outcomes pupils are expected to achieve
 - continuing to develop middle leaders' skills so that they become capable of leading their areas appropriately and are able to challenge underachievement correctly
 - ensuring that governors use robust systems so that they are knowledgeable about the progress made by all groups of pupils and the quality of teaching in the school.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- In a short time, the newly appointed interim headteacher has moved swiftly to identify the key issues in the school. She has started to address the legacy of poor progress, weak teaching and a lack of robust systems to check how well pupils are doing. She has already gained the confidence of staff, parents and pupils.
- The interim headteacher, together with her senior team, which has been augmented by staff from other schools, has a very clear and realistic view of the task faced. Although leaders' own judgements of the current quality of teaching, for example, are more favourable than that found by inspectors, they are honest about the current difficulties.
- Systems to check the quality of teaching are only very recently in place. Leaders recognise that they need to focus on the outcomes for different groups of pupils when observing lessons and not focus so much on what the teacher does. In addition, the weekly and fortnightly meetings between leaders and teachers to monitor the progress made by pupils are very new. Staff told inspectors that they welcome this support and challenge and they are eager to improve.
- The majority of middle leaders are new to post. Working with senior leaders and external consultants, they are only now beginning to put in place systems to check thoroughly the quality of teaching and the progress made by pupils. These vital arrangements were either not in place last year or not used robustly. As a result, those middle leaders in post at that time were not able to do their job properly. Middle leaders report that they welcome the support and guidance from senior leaders and feel they are learning how to do their job effectively. However, it is too early to judge whether these changes will have the positive impact expected.
- Senior leaders have started to address weaknesses in mathematics teaching. Additional support and coaching is in place using staff from another local primary school and external consultants. Again, it is early days and no impact is as yet apparent. Similarly, a thorough review of the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) has been undertaken following a three-year decline in results. Training for the whole school staff has been undertaken so that teachers in Key Stage 2 understand how to help pupils who find some words difficult.
- Leaders are reviewing the current curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils. There is a range of extra-curricular activities, including sporting and musical activities plus visits to places of interest out of school. Although some lessons emphasise the need to respect others and help pupils to understand about different cultures and communities, this aspect of school life is not firmly embedded.
- During the last year there was considerable turbulence in staffing and leadership. Several new staff joined the school in September 2015. A high proportion of teachers are either newly qualified or recently qualified. Staff who returned their questionnaire report confidence in the senior leadership team. Leaders have ensured that all staff have appropriate and challenging performance targets to meet during the academic year.
- The primary physical education and sports funding is being used appropriately to help improve teachers' ability to teach the subject successfully. It is also used to improve pupils' engagement and interest in sports activities, both during the school day and at out-of-school clubs.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that the additional funding for those pupils eligible for pupil premium has been spent effectively. This is because the systems to track pupils' progress have not been robust. As a result the funding has not necessarily been spent to help those pupils who need it most and disadvantaged pupils have not made the progress that they should.
- Leaders work hard to ensure that pupils are safe. Policies and systems regarding safeguarding are secure and up to date. Records of incidents are kept but not currently analysed in great depth to identify patterns. Training is undertaken and leaders plan to provide refresher training at the start of the spring term and also to take part in the 'Prevent' (government advice to schools to have due regard to the need to identify signs of extremism and radicalisation) training organised by the local authority.
- In the period since the previous inspection, the local authority initially had limited links with the school. However, during the past year, they have become more involved in order to support leadership and provide additional help where it is most needed.
- Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

■ The governance of the school

- The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities, including the performance management of the interim headteacher, effectively. They were not, until recently, checking that the information provided to them is accurate. Consequently, it is only since the appointment of the interim headteacher that they are starting to provide the robust quality assurance needed.
 - Governors are only now beginning to track the spending and impact of pupil premium funding and sports funding robustly.
 - Since the previous inspection governors have challenged leaders and asked questions about the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils. Governors recognise the difficulties faced by the school and are determined that things will recover rapidly and that all improvements are sustainable and lead to considerably better progress for all pupils. Governors were unaware of the weaknesses in the school until the external national test results in 2015.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

- As a result of weak teaching over time, pupils are making inadequate progress. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. In addition, there are weaknesses in the way teachers assess how well pupils are doing and use this information to help them set work for pupils.
- Too often pupils told inspectors that their work is too easy and they have to wait for others to catch up before doing something else. Although not always the case, it was often prevalent in the classes for pupils in Years 3 and 4. This lack of challenge means that pupils' attention wavers and low-level disruption occurs.
- Pupils do not always take sufficient pride in their work. When inspectors looked at books, they found that too much work was untidy. For example, pupils did not ensure that they put figures in the right places when using their mathematics books. Staff do not always follow up on these shortcomings.
- Staff mark pupils' English and mathematics books regularly, but not so their topic books. The quality and usefulness of the best marking does not, however, always help pupils know how to improve their work. Too often positive comments tell the pupils what they have done, for example 'you have completed the task', with no clear information provided as to the next step. The use of 'green pen' work by pupils at the start of the day is proving popular, as pupils respond and make changes to their work. Again, it is early days and it is not possible to know if it has the intended impact.
- The teaching of mathematics is weak. In this subject particularly, teachers' subject knowledge is insecure and pupils' mathematical skills and understanding are not consolidated. In Years 3 and 4 inspectors saw that a different activity was taught each week. As a result pupils' understanding of different mathematical skills is muddled. Leaders recognise and have started to address this issue, and they have put in place coaching programmes designed to help. However, the impact of this is not evident.
- Teachers do not use questioning effectively enough so that pupils can explain and develop their answers. One-word responses are too often acceptable. As a result, opportunities to develop pupils' language skills are missed.
- The deployment and use of teaching assistants is variable. Too often their skills are not used well enough so that they can support and challenge all groups of pupils properly. Where they give additional help to pupils who are new to learning English, their work is effective.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Leaders cater well for the considerable number of pupils who arrive and depart the school at times other than that normally seen. They manage to successfully integrate these pupils. Inspectors were told by pupils that for the vast majority of the time, all pupils get on well with each other and differences are known and respected. Those parents who spoke with inspectors felt that some parents are less tolerant of the recent influx of additional pupils to the school and this view was expressed during the inspection.

- Bullying does occur, mainly in the form of name calling. Pupils told inspectors that they understand how to keep themselves safe when using modern technology and are confident they are able to get help if needed from adults.
- Records of bullying, behaviour and racist incidents are kept. Although there are more incidents recorded this year compared to the same time in the previous year, leaders are confident that staff are more aware of the need to record all events rather than there being an increase in incidents. Leaders are keeping a close eye on the situation.
- The programme of activities to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evolving effectively, especially through 'jigsaw' time. Inspectors saw pupils respecting others' views and speaking about their views and feelings regarding bullying and being bullied. Clear rules were known so that there was a respect between pupils as they expressed themselves. However, this culture is not fully embedded within all classes.
- Pupils told inspectors how proud they are of the poppy display and were pleased that it received media coverage. They understand the relevance of Armistice Day and the importance of remembrance. A typical comment was, 'we have to be quiet for the soldiers'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Any boisterous behaviour, some of which was seen during the inspection, was effectively dealt with by staff. This supports pupils' view that inappropriate behaviour and language is dealt with firmly. However, pupils who replied to their questionnaire and those who spoke with inspectors said that behaviour in lessons was not good and often the perpetrators were not challenged.
- Inspectors saw, and senior leaders agree, that there is inappropriate behaviour in some lessons. Very often, but not exclusively, this was found in Key Stage 2 and was not challenged appropriately by adults. Too often pupils daydream or wander around the classroom because they are bored or the lesson does not interest them and they do not want to do their work. Demanding attention from the teacher is another tactic employed by some pupils, so that the pace of learning for the whole class slows.
- Overall attendance, although improving, is still too low and below the national averages. A higher than average proportion of pupils are persistently absent. Rigorous measures, including working with staff from other schools in the area, posters in the school, reminders in newsletters and parental fines are now in place.
- Almost all staff who responded to the staff survey agreed or strongly agreed that any inappropriate behaviour is dealt with effectively and that behaviour is good at the school.
- At the recent parents evening, 81 parents completed the school's questionnaire. The vast majority of these parents were happy with most aspects of the school. Just over half of the parents felt that bullying was dealt with effectively, with over three quarters of them happy with the way the school ensures that pupils are well behaved.

Outcomes for pupils

are inadequate

- Too many pupils throughout the school underachieve. The progress they make is inadequate, especially in mathematics, considering their starting points.
- Although not officially validated, in the 2015 national tests the attainment and progress of pupils at the end of Year 6 was well below the standard set by the current government. Compared to the results in 2014 for Year 6 pupils, the drop is significant and did not match the overambitious results expected.
- The progress made by all groups of pupils, including the most able, disadvantaged, those with special educational needs and those pupils who are new to learning English, was inadequate. Very few pupils made more than expected progress. Observation of pupils' books during the inspection confirmed that, in the vast majority of cases, this situation is still prevalent because the quality of teaching is inadequate.
- The data provided by teachers regarding the progress being made by individual pupils in their class is often unreliable and there is little or no evidence in pupils' books to support their view of progress.
- Throughout the school, pupils' skills in English, and particularly so in mathematics, are weak. Pupils are not well prepared for the next stage of their education when they leave at the end of Year 6.
- The impact of pupil premium funding is limited. This is because the information about pupils was not gathered systematically last year to identify correctly which pupils needed additional help. At the moment the gaps between different groups of pupils and the national picture are wide. It is too early to judge

whether gaps for disadvantaged and other pupils are closing because the information being gathered is new and not always reliable.

- The proportion of pupils in Year 1 reaching the expected standard in the national phonics reading check has fallen for the last three years. It is considerably lower than that seen nationally.
- The recently appointed interim leaders agree that the outcomes for pupils are inadequate. Despite their wish to promote equality of opportunity, the underachievement throughout the school means that that pupils are not getting equal opportunities to succeed. Leaders have introduced regular meetings with staff and checks on the progress made by pupils. Again, it is early days.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- Children enter the Nursery class with skills and abilities below those typical for their age. By the time they leave Reception a higher proportion than at the time of the previous inspection are making the progress expected of them. Nevertheless, in the last three years, no children have made better than expected progress while in the early years.
- Assessment of children's starting points is accurate and records are kept so that leaders can check the progress being made by different children. However, analysing this information is a recent activity and as yet leaders cannot identify if some groups, especially those children who are disadvantaged, are doing better than others. Overall, children are developing appropriate skills in reading, writing and number work. However, by the time they start Year 1, their skills are still below others of their age.
- The attention given by leaders to the use and impact of pupil premium funding is limited. Consequently leaders are unable to identify if the money, which is generally used to provide additional help for children, has made a difference.
- Children, especially the most-able girls, concentrate well and are keen to read books and improve their writing. Boys, on the other hand, do not apply themselves readily to reading, writing and number work, preferring to choose activities outdoors which do not involve practising these key skills. Children are taught well how to blend sounds together and thus many can successfully identify new words. On occasions, however, children do not have sufficient opportunities to talk about their work and so develop their speaking skills because adults jump in too quickly.
- Children listen to instructions from adults and are taught to share resources and take turns sensibly. These skills they do well and there are well established routines in the classrooms. Children are taught how to keep themselves safe and to respect others at all times. Safeguarding is effective and children's welfare is a high priority for all staff.
- Parents contribute to children's learning journeys. They are kept well informed regularly and told inspectors that they are pleased with the provision afforded to their children.

School details

Unique reference number	107063
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10002047

This inspection 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	349
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Daniels
Interim Headteacher	Catherine Whittingham
Telephone number	0114 244 1512
Website	www.acreshillschool.co.uk
Email address	headteacher@acreshill.sheffield.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 October 2013

Information about this school

- The school is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children) is above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and with English as an additional language is well above average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils receive support for their particular special educational needs.
- An interim headteacher was appointed in September 2015 and four class teachers took up their posts at the same time.
- In 2014 the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. It is unlikely that these standards will be met in 2015.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in all classes. Many were jointly observed with members of the senior leadership team. They also made a series of short visits to observe small-group teaching. They also observed an assembly and heard pupils from Year 2, Years 3 and 4 and Year 6 read.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, middle leaders, the Chair of Governors, the vice-chair and two other members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils from Years 3, 5 and 6. Other pupils were spoken to informally at lunch and playtime.
- Inspectors analysed a range of data provided by the school relating to pupils' attainment, progress and attendance. They also reviewed a number of other documents covering leaders' monitoring and tracking of the quality of teaching; pupils' progress; school policies; plans and improvement documents; records of behaviour and support for disadvantaged pupils and those with particular needs.
- There were too few responses to the online questionnaire 'Parent View' to be viewed. Inspectors did take account of the parental responses gathered by leaders at a recent parents evening.
- A number of parents spoke with inspectors.
- The inspection took account of the 19 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspection took account of the 17 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Marianne Young, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Brian Stillings	Ofsted Inspector
Robert Pritchard	Ofsted Inspector

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