

Corporation Road Community Primary School

Corporation Road, Darlington, County Durham, DL3 6AR

Inspection dates

2–3 February 2016

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	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Safeguarding is not effective. The safeguarding policies and procedures do not fulfil statutory requirements.
- Leaders have not tackled years of extremely low attainment at the end of the early years and Key Stage 1.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is inaccurate and overly positive.
- The governing body does not check the school's performance with sufficient rigour. Governors do not have high enough expectations of the children in the early years and pupils in Key Stage 1.
- The progress made by children in the early years is inadequate. Assessment in the early years has been inaccurate over time. Teaching does not support children to achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. Children are not prepared well for the increased demands of Year 1.
- Teachers do not take sufficient account of what pupils already know and can do. Pupils, especially the most able, do not make sufficient progress and attain the very highest standards. Teaching support staff are not always deployed effectively.
- Assessment procedures are unclear and lack precision. There is no system to check the progress made by pupils who have special educational needs or disability.
- Too few pupils achieve the phonics (letters and the sounds they make) standard in Year 1.
- Pupils do not always show a thirst for learning. Lack of challenge in poorly planned lessons leads to some pupils indulging in low-level disruptive behaviour and subsequently making poor progress.
- Too many pupils are late for school. They miss too much learning and fall behind their classmates.

The school has the following strengths

- Disadvantaged pupils achieve better results than non-disadvantaged pupils in school.
- Pupils are polite and courteous. They behave well around school and show respect to adults.
- Attendance has improved and persistent absence has been eradicated since the new headteacher took up her post.

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?

- Immediately ensure that all statutory policies and procedures are in place, up to date, understood by staff and available to parents.
- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governors, by:
 - increasing the capacity of senior, middle and subject leaders to drive the improvement of pupils' outcomes
 - ensuring the school's evaluation of its own effectiveness is accurate and based upon precise and regular checks on pupils' progress
 - improving the provision for the most-able pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability
 - establishing effective and accurate systems and procedures for assessing, tracking, analysing and evaluating the achievement of pupils in all key stages
 - monitoring the performance of all teachers more rigorously so that they clearly understand their areas for development, are held to account for closing gaps in pupils' attainment and access high-quality support where necessary
 - reducing the number of pupils who are late for school
 - making sure that the school's website includes all statutory information including full details about the curriculum and the impact of additional government funding
 - ensuring that all leaders and governors fully understand what progress pupils are capable of and what constitutes good or better progress for pupils from their individual starting points
 - increasing the expertise of the governing body in holding leaders to account.
- Urgently improve the impact of teaching on pupils' learning so that it is at least consistently good and enables all pupils, in all subjects, to reach their full potential by:
 - developing teachers' skills and confidence in assessing the standard of pupils' work
 - planning interesting activities that take full account of what pupils already know so that pupils' interest and enthusiasm for learning do not wane in lessons
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - identifying teachers' weak subject knowledge and providing training to address the issue
 - developing the skills of the teaching assistants and deploying the teaching assistant workforce more effectively so that it has a greater impact on pupils' learning.
- Urgently improve the quality of provision in the early years so that all children, regardless of their starting points, enter Year 1 with the necessary skills by:
 - ensuring that assessment information about the children's skills on entry to the early years is accurate and that similarly rigorous assessments are undertaken throughout the key stage so that progress can be measured and underachievement addressed quickly
 - using accurate assessment information to plan activities which enable the children to make faster progress
 - developing the teaching of phonics in both the Nursery and Reception classes so that children, especially the most able, are taught new sounds as soon as they are ready
 - encouraging children to think deeply and reason effectively by increasing the expertise of adults to ask open-ended and searching questions.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is inaccurate and overly positive. The evaluation does not take account of the standards pupils reach at the end of the early years and Key Stage 1 which have been significantly below average over time.
- The new headteacher is ambitious for the pupils, the staff and the school. However, the drive for school improvement rests too heavily on her shoulders, and her shoulders alone, because there is too little leadership capacity in the school.
- The headteacher has quite rightly identified that middle leadership requires some development and has engaged the services of an external consultant to provide bespoke training. This consultant has provided the school with a very astute and accurate analysis of the school's strengths and areas for development. Unfortunately, the consultant's findings were not used to inform and update the school's evaluation of its own effectiveness.
- The leadership of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate. Arrangements for checking on the quality of teaching are not focused sharply enough on pupils' learning and progress. Feedback leaders give to teachers following observations does not make it exactly clear how they need to improve their teaching and pupils' learning.
- Senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers are unable to track the attainment and progress of individual pupils and groups of pupils effectively because the school's current systems and procedures for assessment are unclear and confusing.
- The leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability is weak. Too many pupils who have English as an additional language are incorrectly classified as having special educational needs or disability. Pupils who do have genuine educational needs or disability are served poorly because leaders do not make the best use of external agencies to assess and support their needs. In addition, this vulnerable group is let down by inadequate assessment of their progress.
- The school's curriculum is not broad and balanced. Provision for some subject areas, such as science, is inadequate. Science is not taught often enough in some year groups. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to carry out practical scientific investigations. As a result, the conclusions that pupils draw from the results of the few investigations that they do carry out are of poor quality.
- Subject leaders are keen to develop their own expertise and practice. Some are frustrated by teachers' lack of subject knowledge and lack of opportunities to provide further training. One subject leader described the quality of teaching in the subject she leads as 'shocking' throughout the school.
- The school has employed a full-time speech and language technician to support the development of pupils' communication skills. The technician's assessments indicate that pupils are making progress and that the support is valuable. However, leaders have not yet measured the impact of this innovative approach in terms of pupils' academic progress. They do not know if the school's money has been spent well.
- The headteacher, since taking up post, has undertaken assertive actions which have increased pupils' attendance and reduced significantly the number of pupils who are persistently absent. Too many pupils are still late for school and no action has yet been taken to establish the reasons for the lateness.
- The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.
- Pupil premium funding is spent wisely and ensures that disadvantaged pupils at the end of each key stage achieve better results than non-disadvantaged pupils in school. Disadvantaged pupils benefit from carefully targeted and bespoke tuition. Many attend the daily, after-school, hands-on-homework club.
- The physical education and sports funding has been used effectively to increase participation rates in sporting activities.
- The school offers an extensive range of extra-curricular activities which are very popular and widely attended. Pupils particularly enjoy working in the 'corporadio' studio to produce and present their own radio shows which are broadcast over the internet.
- The school promotes pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development well through a wide range of visits and visitors. Leaders make the very best use of their own community to develop pupils' understanding and awareness of diversity, respect, tolerance and other fundamental British values.
- The local authority, although aware of the issues, has not acted quickly enough on behalf of the children in Darlington to challenge underachievement in the early years, Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2.

■ The governance of the school

- Governance is ineffective. Governors have a weak understanding of the progress that pupils should make from their starting points. They do not have high enough expectations of, and aspirations for, the children who attend the school. Governors have failed to take note of the recent advice given by an external consultant which clearly states that children who enter Nursery with below typical skills are expected to catch up with their peers by the end of the Reception Year. Governors have not challenged senior leaders with sufficient rigour about the attainment and progress of pupils in the early years, Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2.
- Governors have not ensured that their school has effective and accurate systems and procedures for assessing, tracking, analysing and evaluating the achievement of pupils.
- Governors have not supported the new headteacher with sufficient rigour during the first few months of her headship. Governors have not ensured that there is enough leadership capacity in the school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. There were serious shortcomings with the child protection policy on the school's website at the beginning of the inspection. It had not been reviewed within 12 months. It did not include any references to the most recent statutory guidance or make reference to important issues such as female genital mutilation, child sexual exploitation, self-harm and eating disorders. A new policy had been ratified by the governing body but had not been published on the school's website. This new policy was published during the inspection but did not cover all the statutory safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Specifically this policy, nor any of the policies in school, did not cover the use of mobile phones and cameras in the early years.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

- The quality of teaching over time in the early years and Key Stage 1 has failed to improve the standards pupils reach in reading, writing and mathematics which are significantly below average.
- Although teachers mark work conscientiously and in accordance with the school's marking policy, their assessments of what the pupils can do are often unreliable. As a result, teachers do not take enough account of what pupils already know to plan tasks which build on their existing skills and knowledge. Too often, pupils repeat work which they have already mastered. During the inspection, there was little difference between the work on two-dimensional shapes in Nursery and in Year 3. Children in the Nursery class could identify a hexagon and name some of its properties. Some of the older pupils could not.
- Teaching for pupils who have special educational needs and disability does not lead to accelerated progress because their teaching plans, 'one plans', do not contain really specific targets. These plans are not always reviewed in a timely manner. Some targets have not been reviewed for nine months and are out of date.
- The proportion of pupils who achieve the standard in the Year 1 phonics check is below average over time. Leaders have adapted the timetable to ensure that pupils in the early years and Key Stage 1 can access phonics teaching that is more closely aligned to their needs and abilities. Not all teachers take advantage of this approach to the curriculum and fail to plan learning carefully to maximise pupils' knowledge and skills in reading.
- Least-able pupils in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 are unable to read the books chosen by their teachers as being at exactly the right level for their abilities. Pupils struggle to use their knowledge of phonics, picture clues or common, but tricky, words. These pupils have no strategies to read unknown words.
- The level of teaching assistant support is generous but its quality is too variable. Additional adults are not used to good effect during all parts of lessons. For example, when teachers explain work to their class, opportunities to support and encourage pupils' learning are missed. Teachers do not plan for their teaching assistants well enough to ensure that they target the right pupils at the right time.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of their most-able pupils. As a result, they do not plan sufficiently challenging work. Not enough of the school's most-able pupils attain the highest standards at the end of the early years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- In lower Key Stage 2, teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics is not always good enough. Pupils are often confused by their teacher's explanations.
- Pupils make the most progress in the classes of teachers who ask open-ended questions which require deep thought and reasoned answers.
- Teaching in upper Key Stage 2 is good so that the vast majority of pupils make accelerated progress. Pupils are only one term behind their peers nationally by the end of Year 6.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils do not always take enough pride in the presentation of their work. This is especially true of the school's most-able pupils. The presentation and content of their writing has regressed since the beginning of the academic year. They have not developed that sense of self-worth to enable them to reach the very highest levels through perseverance and determination.
- Older pupils willingly take on roles of responsibility such as monitors in the dining hall. Monitors take their roles seriously. They talk to younger pupils and help younger pupils to fasten their coats before going outside to play.
- Pupils are very happy to attend Corporation Road Community Primary School. The school's own survey of parents' views indicates that parents are overwhelmingly happy with the school because their children are happy in school. One parent told inspectors that she was 'over the moon' with the school and its teachers. Parents appreciate the many opportunities they have to be involved in the life of the school.
- Despite serious shortcomings in the school's safeguarding policies, pupils feel safe in school. Year 2 pupils explained carefully to inspectors how to stay safe online by not talking to strangers and by not divulging any personal information such as their names, ages and addresses.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' attitudes to their learning are variable and dependent on the quality of teaching. When pupils are challenged and inspired they become totally engrossed in their learning. However, on other occasions, they switch off, lose interest and disturb other children.
- Pupils attend school more often this year than they have done in previous years. Attendance is improving. Persistent absence, which was much higher than average in previous years, has been eradicated this year. However, too many pupils are late for school in the morning and miss valuable learning time.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in and around school. They are polite, courteous and respectful to visitors.
- Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying. Pupils are absolutely confident that the headteacher will deal with any incidences of bullying straight away. They told inspectors that incidences of bullying have reduced but still do occur occasionally. The school's procedures to record and analyse incidents of bullying have been tightened since the beginning of the current academic year.
- Pupils are aware that racist incidents are not tolerated in their multicultural school in which diversity and difference are celebrated. Pupils told inspectors that the school deals well with the rare instances of pupils commenting on other pupils' dress or skin colour.
- Pupils are especially supportive of other pupils who are new to the school and do not speak English as their first language. On several occasions during the two-day long inspection, pupils were seen to be interpreting for other pupils and encouraging them to be brave and have a go.

Outcomes for pupils are inadequate

- Outcomes are inadequate because too many pupils make inadequate progress in the early years, in Key Stage 1 and in lower Key Stage 2.
- Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 have reached significantly below average standards in reading, writing and mathematics every year since the last inspection in 2010. The current standard of work in the workbooks of the Year 2 pupils indicates a continuing pattern of underachievement.
- Year 2 pupils are not ready for Key Stage 2. Similarly, not enough Year 6 pupils are secondary ready by the time they leave Corporation Road Community Primary School.
- Disadvantaged pupils reach higher standards than non-disadvantaged pupils in school. However, disadvantaged pupils are still two terms behind other pupils nationally by the end of Key Stage 1. Similarly, and despite making accelerated progress in Year 5 and Year 6, disadvantaged pupils remain one term behind other pupils nationally at the end of Key Stage 2.

- The most-able pupils make inadequate progress from their starting points. Not enough reach the highest standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Current workbooks indicate that the most-able pupils are making better progress in mathematics than they are in writing. Pupils' presentation is poor, their sentence construction is underdeveloped and their vocabulary choices are pedestrian.
- Inspectors are unable to judge the progress of the pupils who have special educational needs or disability because there is little work in their workbooks. In addition, the school has removed its system and procedures to assess the attainment and progress of this vulnerable group of pupils and has not replaced it with an appropriate alternative.
- Although the proportion of pupils who achieved the required standard in the Year 1 check on phonics improved dramatically in 2014 and that improvement was sustained in 2015, it is still below average.

Early years provision

is inadequate

- The requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage are not fully met. Senior leaders are unable to provide an acceptable-use policy which covers the use of cameras and mobile phones in the early years.
- Over time, children in the early years have not made the progress that they should, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. A significantly below-average proportion achieve a good level of development.
- Assessments in the early years have been too low and inaccurate over time and up to December 2015. The new leader of the early years, in post for just four weeks, has taken immediate action to reassess the children in the Reception classes and has a more informed view of their starting points. This leader has also ensured that recent entries in the children's learning journeys, their records of progress, are more focused and linked to the stages in child development. There were no accurate assessments of the children in the Nursery class at the time of the inspection.
- Progress in the acquisition of phonics knowledge in the past was slow because teachers in the Nursery did not plan for children, even if they were ready, to make progress from the lowest level. The current headteacher addressed this issue and the children are now beginning to make better progress.
- The best learning in the early years occurs when children follow their own interests and adults encourage their learning with open-ended questions. The children do not flit between activities. They persevere when they are interested. Progress slows when the planned activities do not meet the needs of the lower-ability and most-able children, when the learning is focused on the middle ground. For example, on the second day of the inspection, the most-able children moved quickly through the content of a session on number leaving others trailing behind. The least-able children became disengaged and progress slowed.
- Teachers plan well to ensure that other cultures are represented in the environment. The children were delighted to explore the Bangladeshi home corner during the inspection. They made curries and, encouraged by a teaching assistant, decided whether to add more salt or more sugar to improve the flavour.
- Relationships are strong in the early years. Children behave well in both Nursery and Reception. They demonstrate good levels of cooperation, take turns and share. The children are happy in the setting. Two girls were seen to investigate and manipulate an inflatable globe of the world. They giggled with delight when it bounced off one of their heads – a delightful moment of awe and wonder for the adults and children in the setting.
- Leaders have developed and improved the outdoor learning environment. The children now have constant access to a well-organised and resourced area and they love it.
- Parents are very appreciative of the efforts the staff make in the early years to ensure that their children enjoy their time at school.

School details

Unique reference number	134075
Local authority	Darlington
Inspection number	10003935

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	337
Appropriate authority	the governing body
Chair	Carole Tuckey
Headteacher	Ann Pringleton
Telephone number	01325 244940
Website	corporationroadschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@corporationroad.darlington.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 September–1 October 2010

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for support through pupil premium funding, is well above average. Pupil premium funding is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Half of the pupils are White British, a quarter of pupils are Bangladeshi and the remainder come from a range of ethnic heritages. Almost half of the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- Children in the early years attend full-time provision in the Reception classes and part-time provision in the Nursery class.
- The school met the government's minimum floor standards for primary schools in 2014.
- A new headteacher took up post in September 2015. The new headteacher was the previous deputy headteacher at the school over an eight-year period.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 23 part-lessons, six of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior, middle and subject leaders, and three governors, including the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body. The lead inspector also spoke to a representative of Darlington local authority and an external educational consultant.
- The inspectors spoke informally to pupils in lessons and at various times during each day. Inspectors also spoke formally to three groups of pupils on the second day of the inspection, a group from Years 1 and 2, another from Years 3 and 4 and a final group from Years 5 and 6.
- Questionnaire returns submitted online by 11 members of staff and one pupil were taken into consideration.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of pupils' workbooks and information about pupils' current progress in lessons. They also reviewed a number of documents including the school improvement plan, attendance records, information relating to the work the school does to keep pupils safe, headteacher's reports to governors and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- The inspectors took account of the views of 11 parents from the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, together with a survey of parental views provided by the school.
- Pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to one of Ofsted's inspectors.

Inspection team

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Nicola Nelson	Ofsted Inspector
Lucie Stephenson	Ofsted Inspector

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