

The Sacriston Primary School

Witton Road, Sacriston, Durham DH7 6LQ

Inspection dates

2–3 November 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and governors have not been diligent in their safeguarding responsibilities. Serious omissions have put pupils at risk.
- Over time, leaders and governors have not managed to turn around poor teaching. As a result, pupils' progress is far too slow.
- Senior leaders have been obstructive and resistant to challenge and support from the local authority and from the newly formed interim executive board.
- Senior and middle leaders are underdeveloped and underused. Until recently, leaders have been unclear about their responsibilities and roles and have therefore been ineffective.
- Teaching is inadequate. Low expectations of what pupils should be able to do prevail throughout the school.
- Teachers do not challenge pupils, especially the most able, including the most able disadvantaged. Consequently, these pupils do not make the progress they should in a wide range of subjects.
- The progress of most groups of pupils, especially in key stage 2, is exceptionally slow and not improving. There are wide differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others.
- Early years provision is weak. As a result, children make limited progress, especially the most able children.
- Leaders and teachers do not actively promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- Behaviour requires improvement. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise self-discipline. Adults struggle to manage the behaviour of a small number of older pupils.
- Rates of absence are too high, especially for disadvantaged pupils.
- Some of the school building is in a poor state of repair. The design of the buildings is such that movement from one area to another is difficult.

The school has the following strengths

- The newly acting headteacher and deputy headteacher have taken swift action to fix safeguarding issues. They are beginning to point the school in the right direction.
- Since their appointment in April, the interim executive board of governors have provided tenacious challenge, persistently holding leaders to account in difficult circumstances.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of 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?

- Improve safeguarding by ensuring that:
 - arrangements to protect pupils fully meet statutory requirements and are compliant with guidance
 - all staff complete all the statutorily required training
 - regular checks are carried out on safeguarding systems and processes, and on the knowledge and practice of adults.
- Improve leadership, management and governance by:
 - securing the effective long-term leadership of the school
 - developing improvement plans that include precise, measurable outcomes and milestones, clear actions, and arrangements for how progress will be checked and by whom
 - clarifying the roles and responsibilities of leaders and holding them to account for the difference their actions make to the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes
 - making more systematic checks on the quality of teaching to identify and address weaknesses
 - embedding the new assessment arrangements so leaders at all levels, and governors, can identify the strengths and weaknesses in the achievement of pupil groups, including disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the most able pupils, in each subject and in all year groups
 - ensuring that the new performance management arrangements are carried out consistently, and that all staff get the training and support they need to improve their teaching
 - when appropriate, establishing permanent governance arrangements, ensuring governors have the knowledge, skills and experience to provide strategic direction and properly hold leaders to account
 - taking steps, in partnership with the local authority, to further improve the school premises.
- Improve the quality of teaching so the rate of pupils' progress in all subjects accelerates by:
 - raising leaders' and teachers' expectations of what pupils should be able to do
 - making sure teachers make effective use of assessment information to plan work that increases and deepens pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills

- improving the consistency and quality of teacher questioning to check pupils’ understanding and deepen pupils’ thinking
 - making sure teachers systematically check pupils’ learning in lessons, adapting pupils’ work to move them forward rapidly
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length in a range of subjects and for a variety of purposes
 - providing opportunities for pupils of all abilities to practise, more routinely, problem-solving and reasoning skills in a range of subjects
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to read for a variety of purposes in a range of subjects, and to make choices about what they read.
- Improve early years provision so that more children reach a good level of development by the time they enter Year 1 and so that the most able children exceed the early learning goals across many areas of learning, by:
- developing provision and resources inside and outside that challenge children and cover all aspects of their development
 - making sure the provision builds on children’s interests and enables them to sustain concentration and enjoyment and to develop independence
 - ensuring that staff make accurate assessments of children’s abilities on entry to the early years and improving the ongoing assessment of children so that it is accurate and informs teachers’ planning
 - ensuring adults know how best to intervene to deepen pupils’ learning
 - more fully involving parents in their children’s learning and assessment.
- Further improve pupils’ personal development and behaviour by:
- developing pupils’ independence, giving them opportunities to take on responsibility and use their initiative, and providing more opportunities for pupils to practise self-discipline
 - giving pupils challenging work that helps them to develop staying power
 - ensuring there is a balance of agreed rewards and sanctions consistently applied by all staff
 - systematically planning opportunities to develop pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning across the curriculum.
- Raise attendance and further reduce persistent absence, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

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.

The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders and governors have not tackled the poor teaching and inadequate pupils' outcomes with sufficient urgency. They have had an overly optimistic view of how well the school is performing.
- School improvement plans are poorly developed. Identified actions do not get to the root of the problems in this school. Furthermore, it is not clear how the impact of actions will be checked and by whom.
- Checks on the quality of teaching have been patchy, disorganised and not routine enough and so have not led to improvements in teaching. Leaders have the skills and knowledge to carry out their duties, but until recently, have been unclear about their roles and responsibilities.
- Staff training has not been good enough. Staff responding to the staff questionnaire are overwhelmingly unhappy about the quality and quantity of professional development they receive. Teacher appraisal has been ineffective. Consequently, teaching does not improve. More recently, under the direction of a local leader in education (LLE), more robust arrangements for teacher appraisal have begun.
- Leaders have identified too many pupils as having special educational needs, when in fact these pupils have simply fallen behind due to poor teaching and do not need special interventions. More recently, leaders have reduced the number of pupils on the list of those who have special educational needs.
- The special educational needs coordinator has begun to make checks on the teaching of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This work is in its early stages so has had minimal impact. The leader targets staff training to meet the identified needs of pupils. This has resulted in pupils with the greatest needs receiving better support. However, leaders do not analyse assessment information to be able to see whether actions are making enough difference.
- The vast majority of pupil premium funding has been used to increase the number of teachers and reduce class sizes. This strategy has failed because it has just increased the amount of weak teaching. There remains a substantial difference between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others.
- Additional government funding for physical education (PE) and sports has been used sensibly to give pupils access to additional sporting activities such as after-school clubs and inter-school competitions. However, leaders have not evaluated the effect that these actions have had on pupils' achievement in PE.
- Leaders have planned a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils study the full range of subjects within interesting topics but teachers do not provide enough challenge to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. Leaders have not evaluated the effectiveness of the curriculum. Leaders were slow to get started with planning how to introduce the 2014 national curriculum and assessment. The English and mathematics curriculum in particular does not deliver the more challenging content required.
- Pupils appreciate the visits to places of interest, which broaden their horizons. Many pupils value the after-school clubs such as junk modelling, games and fitness. Some older pupils are less satisfied with the activities on offer.

- Leaders and teachers do not actively or systematically promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. While pupils generally demonstrate open-mindedness, tolerance and respect, this is as much to do with what pupils bring from home as what they learn in school.
- Under the direction of the current leaders and governors appointed by the local authority (LA), the school is better placed to improve. Most staff, especially leaders, are welcoming of the changes and opportunities now offered.
- The LA provided challenge and support leading up to the infant and junior schools being amalgamated and have continued to be involved right up to the present. Senior leaders and governors have been resistant to this challenge and support, and at times have been obstructive. The LA has rightly applied greater pressure over time and used statutory powers to replace the governing body with an interim executive board (IEB).
- In September this year, the LA carried out a root-and-branch review of the school's effectiveness, identifying many areas for improvement. Leaders have begun to respond positively under the direction of external professionals.
- A local leader of education has worked alongside senior leaders for several months. Despite some of her work being undermined by the most senior leaders, the LLE has brought about a number of positive changes, making increasingly effective use of the assistant headteachers.

Governance of the school

- The previous governors were ineffective in their safeguarding duties. They had an inaccurate view of the school's performance, not understanding the gravity of the alarming information on pupils' progress. The governing body offered little challenge to leaders and did not act with any urgency. Governors did not follow the advice of the local authority, despite formal warnings.
- Governors did not check whether additional funding, such as the pupil premium, was making a difference. They did not keep a close enough eye on the school budget to check it was being used effectively.
- The current IEB is made up of highly effective professionals. These governors, in the face of resistance and lack of cooperation from previous leaders, have been tenacious in challenging them to provide evidence to support their assertions that progress was not so bad. Their hard work has contributed enormously to the school now being in a better position to make the rapid improvement needed.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. There have been serious omissions that the new temporary leaders have swiftly begun to put right.
- The record of checks on the suitability of adults to work with children was not complete until a few days before the inspection. Leaders had not carried out all the appropriate checks on adults.
- There are no child protection records. Adults have not had suitable training so are not knowledgeable enough about the signs to look for that suggest pupils may be at risk of harm or are actually being harmed. There has been no formal system in place for reporting concerns.
- Access to the premises has not been secure enough to ensure that intruders are kept out and pupils are kept in.

- Some safeguarding policies are not up to date and some did not exist until very recently, including a safer recruitment policy and a whistleblowing policy.
- Leaders have not kept any bullying or discriminatory behaviour logs. Until two months ago, there was no suitable recording of accidents.
- Despite these shortcomings, strong relationships between adults and pupils help pupils to feel safe. Very recently, leaders have quickly put in place a number of measures to improve safety, including, for example, making further checks on adults and putting in place electronic access systems on doors. A plan is in place to make further improvements and provide further staff training.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Low expectations of what pupils can and should be able to do are widespread. Teachers largely give pupils work that is too easy, especially the most able pupils. This is because teachers do not make effective use of assessment information, which until recently has often been inaccurate. As a result, the progress of all groups is inadequate, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and other pupils who need to catch up.
- Despite mostly small class sizes, not all teachers are effective at checking pupils' learning during lessons, so do not notice when they need to adapt the activities or offer extra challenge.
- The quality of teachers' questioning is variable. Teachers ask too many questions that do not deepen pupils' thinking. Some questioning is better because it requires pupils to explain their thinking.
- The support that teaching assistants provide is variable. There is some effective one-to-one support for individual pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, this is not consistently the case. Furthermore, this support is mainly directed towards reading and writing interventions, not often mathematics, and rarely other subjects.
- Progress in mathematics is weak, partly because too many pupils have not developed earlier conceptual understanding. This inhibits their progress. Weak basic number and calculation skills are also a barrier for too many pupils. Leaders and teachers have not got to grips with the new, more challenging curriculum. In particular, teachers do not give sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise problem-solving and reasoning skills, including in subjects other than mathematics.
- Most teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to plan and complete longer pieces of writing for a purpose, including in subjects such as geography, history and science. The completed pupil worksheets seen by inspectors were restrictive and limited the amount and quality of the writing pupils produced. The youngest pupils have insufficient opportunities to practise writing. Consequently, too many pupils make poor progress in writing.
- Most pupils learn to read with some fluency and expression. Though the proportion of pupils passing the phonics check at the end of Year 1 is below the national average, nearly all pupils catch up by the end of Year 2. However, pupils' comprehension skills are not as well developed. Pupils are prevented from taking books home because they

are not trusted with them. Pupils are rarely allowed to choose their own books, so too few of them develop an interest in reading or a love of books.

- There are examples of better teaching. Much teaching meets the needs of some of the pupils some of the time. However, teaching is far too inconsistent to bring about the rapid progress needed.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate because, although pupils feel safe, leaders' inaction has risked pupils' safety.
- Pupils understand what bullying is and say that it is rare. They are confident that when it does happen, adults deal with it well so that things improve, even if it is not eradicated. However, pupils have limited knowledge about some forms of bullying such as homophobia. A number of older pupils were not familiar with the term 'racism'. Leaders do not keep logs of bullying or discriminatory behaviour.
- Leaders and teachers teach pupils about some aspects of life in modern Britain. In assemblies, pupils learn about inspirational figures such as Malala Yousafzai. In religious education lessons, pupils learn and retain information about major world faiths. Prospective school councillors give speeches and pupils cast votes, hence developing some insight into democracy.
- Despite this work, leaders and teachers do not promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils actively enough. Much of what pupils know, for example about gender issues, they bring from home, rather than having been taught it in school. In this primarily White British community, there are too few opportunities to learn about different lifestyles or cultures.
- Too many pupils lack independence, relying on teachers to do simple things for them, for example finding a pen. Older pupils have too few opportunities to develop responsibility.
- Older pupils, especially, understand how to stay safe online because they have been taught this. They are taught how to stay safe in other ways, for example on bonfire night.
- Pupils are happy and largely enjoy school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils do not get down to learning quickly enough at the start of lessons. Once they get going, most pupils are diligent and get on with their work, but are not expected to work at a fast enough pace. Pupils are routinely not challenged in their learning so are not developing staying power. They sometimes lose interest. As a result, despite generally positive attitudes to school, pupils' behaviour does not make a strong contribution to learning.
- Given the chance, many pupils are happy to have a go without fear of getting things wrong. For example, in Year 2 pupils were observed confidently having a go at writing some difficult spellings, making sensible choices of letters, even when they were not correct. This is building confidence in these pupils.

- Pupils get along well together in the playground and aggressive behaviour is rare. Pupils follow instructions. However, adults supervise pupils more closely than needed, so pupils do not get a chance to exercise self-discipline.
- Support for a few pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs is not consistently effective. Staff sometimes struggle to manage the behaviour of a few of the older pupils and this affects other pupils' learning.
- Attendance has been below average for the last two years, having fallen again in 2016. Despite some improvement, the rate of persistent absence is above average, disadvantaged pupils especially being absent more often than other pupils are.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- By the time they leave the school, too few pupils reach the expected and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics combined as well as in a range of other subjects. This is because of the slow progress pupils make as a result of poor teaching.
- Progress in key stage 2 over the last few years has been woeful. In 2015, key stage 2 progress was in the bottom 2% nationally. Provisional data shows that progress was exceptionally poor again in 2016, when just about all groups of pupils were in the bottom 10% or lower nationally for progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This includes the most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The progress of pupils currently in the school is no better. Fewer than half the pupils across the school are on track to reach the expected standard this year in reading and writing and only just half of the pupils in mathematics. An even smaller proportion of the current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach the expected standards. From key stage 1 starting points, even taking into account the differences between old and new systems of assessment, this represents inadequate progress.
- There are wide differences in all year groups between disadvantaged pupils currently in the school and other pupils. Over time, the differences between disadvantaged pupils in school and other pupils nationally at each key stage have been too wide.
- Over time, pupils have made better progress in key stage 1, although not in 2015. Over the last academic year progress picked up but was not quick enough to make up for lost time in early years.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- The safeguarding issues that have previously put pupils at risk in key stages 1 and 2 have also been a failing in Nursery and Reception. Safeguarding therefore is ineffective in the early years.
- From generally typical starting points, too few pupils make average and better progress. Too few pupils reach the good level of development of which they are capable, especially disadvantaged children.
- In the past two years, no pupils have exceeded the early learning goals in any areas of learning, including reading, writing and numeracy, because adults do not provide sufficient challenge. Pupils are not well prepared for Year 1. For example, too many pupils in the current Year 1 classes are still struggling to write their name legibly.

- These less than satisfactory outcomes are because of weaknesses in provision. Adults tend to over-direct children. Consequently, children do not have opportunities to develop and enjoy investigative, creative and explorative work in any areas inside or out.
- Though adults sometimes intervene well to enhance children's learning and model appropriate language, asking questions to encourage pupils to talk, adults too often miss opportunities to extend and deepen learning. However, inspectors did observe some effective individual support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders' assertions that children enter the early years with skills, knowledge and understanding below that which is typical for their age have suppressed expectations of what children ought to be able to achieve. Inspectors also found inaccuracies in ongoing assessments.
- Leaders and teachers do not involve parents nearly enough in their children's learning and assessment so they do not get a full picture of each child's interests and development.
- Relationships between adults and children and between children themselves are positive. Children follow the instructions of adults and get along together well. Children are generally confident.

School details

Unique reference number	114007
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10019765

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	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	260
Appropriate authority	The interim executive board
Chair	Pat Nelson
Acting headteacher	David Loomes
Telephone number	01913 710 777
Website	www.sacristonprimary.durham.sch.uk/
Email address	sacristoninfant@durhamlearning.net
Date of previous inspection	7 December 2006

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website. There is information missing in relation to some aspects of admissions, key stage 2 assessment, the curriculum and the impact of the pupil premium spending.
- The Sacriston Primary School is an average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The school meets the 2015 floor standards. These are the minimum expectations of pupils' achievement in English and mathematics set by the government.
- The proportion of pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.

- Since the last inspection, the junior school was brought under the leadership of the headteacher of the infant school. This formed a single school with the same unique reference number as the previous infant school.
- The previous headteacher left the school in September 2016.
- An acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher had been in post for just a few days when the inspection took place. A local leader in education has been supporting the school since April 2016.
- An interim executive board replaced the board of governors in April 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes at least once to observe pupils' learning. Most of these observations took place with either the acting headteacher, acting deputy headteacher, the LLE, or one of the assistant headteachers.
- Inspectors talked with pupils about their learning and what it is like to be a pupil at the school. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work from the current and previous school years, and listened to a few pupils read. Pupils' behaviour was observed around the school, including at breaktimes and at lunchtime.
- Discussions took place with the acting headteacher, the LLE and other school leaders and teachers. The lead inspector met with members of the interim executive board, and three local authority representatives.
- The inspectors listened to the views of several parents during the inspection. The lead inspector met with a small group of parents separately, at their request. There were 30 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. The inspector considered 12 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Documents were analysed, including school development plans, governing body minutes and information about pupils' achievement.
- Records relating to attendance and safeguarding were scrutinised.

Inspection team

Philip Riozzi, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jim Hannah	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Humble	Ofsted Inspector

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