

Sherard Primary School and Community Centre

Grange Drive, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire LE13 1HA

Inspection dates

16–18 November 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement, while rising rapidly, requires improvement because pupils do not make good progress from their different starting points, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils' progress varies in different subjects and across year groups. In some classes and subjects, the most able pupils are not challenged effectively. In others, least-able pupils do not get the support they need.
- Too many pupils leave the school not having attained the standards needed to be ready for the next stage of their education, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Leaders, including governors, have historically been too slow to identify and tackle inconsistencies in pupils' achievements. This has led to a trend in declining results at the school that has only recently been reversed.
- Recent improvements to teaching have not come soon enough for too many pupils. Consequently, teaching has not led to pupils achieving as well as they should.
- Assessment information is not used as effectively as it could be by leaders and teachers to ensure that all groups of pupils make good progress.
- Differences between disadvantaged pupils' attainment and non-disadvantaged pupils' nationally are not diminishing quickly enough. The pupil premium is not used well enough to help accelerate progress, including for the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Children do not leave the early years well enough prepared for key stage 1. Their mathematical development is not sufficiently supported.
- Leadership of the pre-school is not strong enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has reversed the decline in standards since the last inspection successfully. He has a clear vision for the future, which is shared among all staff and governors.
- Some weaknesses in teaching have been tackled effectively. Pupils are now beginning to make much better progress across all key stages.
- Pupils behave very well. They are very tolerant of each other's differences and enjoy coming to school. They make a significant contribution to the warm and welcoming community of the school.
- The enhanced provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective and ensures that they make good progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that:
 - the progress of disadvantaged pupils accelerates until the difference in their achievement with other pupils nationally diminishes
 - the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, and the least able pupils are consistently challenged
 - there are consistently strong outcomes for all groups of pupils across all key stages.
- Improve the effectiveness of the early years foundation stage by:
 - strengthening the leadership of the pre-school
 - improving the learning environment, particularly outside
 - accelerating the progress children make in mathematics.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - strengthening leaders' use of assessment information to analyse how well groups of pupils do across all key stages
 - including measurable success criteria in the school improvement plan at regular milestones, so that leaders at all levels can analyse the impact of their work
 - improving how the pupil premium grant is used to improve outcomes 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.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that teaching leads to consistently good progress for groups of pupils over time, particularly those who are disadvantaged. The relatively new headteacher has successfully tackled the weakest teaching. Current pupils are beginning to make better progress. However, a legacy of underachievement means that many still have a long way to go before they have caught up.
- Leaders' evaluations of the school's effectiveness are not precise enough. Leaders do not make good enough use of pupils' assessment information to evaluate where progress remains weaker, particularly when analysing the progress of different groups. Too often, they dismiss the relevance of current assessment information because of the impact of pupils who have joined the school outside the usual admissions times or those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The pupil premium grant is not used well enough. Strategies to support disadvantaged pupils have not led to their progress accelerating consistently. Some disadvantaged pupils are beginning to make better progress. However, not enough has been done to diminish the gap in their attainment with non-disadvantaged pupils nationally at the end of key stage 2. Nor do the most-able disadvantaged pupils consistently achieve as well as they should.
- Performance management is not as rigorous as it needs to be. Despite improvements made to teachers' appraisals since the arrival of the headteacher, targets remain too generalised and do not do enough to hold teachers to account for the progress of different groups of pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged. The headteacher and other leaders provide useful support to help teachers improve their practice. They rightly recognise that this now needs to be more challenging.
- The headteacher has given some useful feedback to teachers about what they are doing in lessons. However, feedback has not been sharply enough focused on the impact of teaching on groups of pupils' progress in lessons and over time. This means, at times, that leaders' evaluations of the effectiveness of teaching are overgenerous.
- The headteacher, through his determined leadership, has successfully improved the effectiveness of the school, following a decline in standards after the previous inspection. He has put in place a number of strategies to improve how teachers plan and deliver lessons. He has been tenacious in his desire to improve teaching. After a period of instability, staff now appreciate the importance of the changes he has made. Inspectors could clearly see the difference that has been made to teaching and the impact this is beginning to have on pupils' progress.
- The headteacher has a clear vision for the curriculum he wants pupils to experience. Since his arrival, he has led positive changes to how a number of different subjects are taught. Learning is now planned through cross-curricular topics, which pupils enjoy. Enrichment activities have also been developed well to help pupils broaden their experiences. Pupils benefit from lessons that help them understand and respect people's differences. They learn about different faiths and cultures, and this prepares

them well for life in modern Britain.

- Middle leadership is well developed and often effective. For example, the leadership of physical education and music is very effective, as is the induction for teachers who are new to their careers. Middle leaders take responsibility for observing practice in their areas of responsibility and give useful feedback to enable staff to improve. Middle leaders contribute well to senior leaders' analysis of strengths and weaknesses in provision.
- The physical education and sport funding grant is used effectively. The headteacher has adapted how this is used to ensure that all pupils benefit from greater opportunities to be active, whatever their physical abilities. Effectively supported by the leader for physical education, he has ensured that pupils have access to a wide range of sporting clubs and inter-schools competitions, as well as sports leadership opportunities. Staff are getting increasing opportunities to develop their own practice, which is helping to ensure that there is wider capacity for high-quality physical education lessons across the school.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. The special educational needs coordinator has a very good understanding of such pupils, both within the enhanced provision and in the main school, and how well they are doing. She analyses carefully the difference interventions have on progress and changes the support these pupils receive if necessary. This has ensured that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.
- Leaders' use of external support has been varied. A number of useful visits have been undertaken by the local authority, as well as a local teaching school alliance. Some issues identified as a result of these visits have been tackled well –for example, inconsistencies in the quality of learning just prior to the current headteacher taking up post. However, leaders have not made the same progress in areas such as improving how they use pupils' assessment information to understand the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Governance

- Governors support the headteacher well in setting the strategic direction for the school. For example, they are in the advanced stages of converting the school to an academy. They acknowledge that, despite having come a long way in the last 18 months, there are still areas for improvement at the school. Some useful information provided by the headteacher means that governors are aware of the improvements that have been made to teaching. However, governors are too quick to accept that weaknesses in assessment information can be attributed to the contextual issues of the school. Furthermore, leaders' plans for improvement lack criteria by which governors can judge whether improvements are having the impact needed in a timely manner. This means that they have not always held leaders to account as well as they should.
- Governors make a strong contribution to the management of staff performance. They challenge appropriately the link between the quality of teaching and pay, and ensure that only good performance is rewarded.
- Governors manage the overall finances at the school effectively. For example, they have successfully challenged leaders to tackle the deficit budget over the last five

years. However, governors are not kept informed about what difference the pupil premium grant has made to disadvantaged pupils' progress.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. All staff receive regular and relevant training. Checks on the suitability of staff and volunteers are systematic and rigorous. School leaders work effectively with families who find it more challenging to engage with the school. This has helped to improve attendance.
- There are robust systems within the school for keeping pupils safe. These include how the school assesses risks on school outings, for example. There are clear child protection and safeguarding policies which have due regard for the latest statutory regulations. Staff are well aware of their role in protecting pupils from harm. The school makes very good use of other agencies to support its work in this area.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across subjects is variable and not yet consistently good. Despite actions by the headteacher to tackle weaknesses in teaching in some year groups, newly introduced approaches are too recent and do not ensure that all groups of pupils make good progress. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are not always sufficiently challenged, and so do not learn as quickly as they could in all lessons and over time.
- The teaching of reading has some strengths, but these are not consistent. In particular, pupils who struggle to read are not supported well enough to make the progress they need to catch up. Despite reading being taught very well to groups of pupils, there are too few extra opportunities offered to least-able pupils to practise what they are taught in school. This was particularly evident when inspectors listened to pupils read. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and often. Texts studied in class engage pupils and are helping to develop their love of reading. The teaching of phonics is increasingly effective and is leading to better outcomes in the Year 1 national phonics screening check.
- The teaching of mathematics is not secure. Despite recent improvements, lessons do not consistently help least-able pupils to make progress. This is because, although teachers reinforce basic concepts with these pupils, they provide too few opportunities for them to apply and practise what they already know.
- Teachers deploy teaching assistants and other adults to good effect. Teaching assistants are often skilled and sometimes add significant value to the learning experiences of some pupils.
- Leaders have introduced a number of new strategies to improve the teaching of writing and these are effective. Pupils are now clearer about what they need to do to write effectively. Teachers ensure that there are links between what pupils are learning about in their topics and what they are asked to write about. As a result, pupils' enjoyment of writing has increased and pupils are achieving more success.

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the enhanced provision is good. Teachers know the specific needs of the pupils they provide for well. They ensure that lessons capture pupils' interests and help them to build on what they can already do. Staff work together as a team effectively to support learning. This helps pupils in the provision to make good progress from sometimes very low starting points.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils enjoy school and feel valued as individuals. Consequently, they flourish in the learning environment that has been nurtured. For example, pupils who use the breakfast club enjoy their time with their peers and are well prepared for the start of the school day. Most pupils grow in self-confidence and increasingly want to learn, although a very few still harbour more negative feelings towards their learning.
- Pupils say that bullying is exceptionally rare. This is reflected in the school's own records. Through effective personal and social education, pupils develop a clear understanding of the different forms of bullying and believe that there is no use of discriminatory language. Pupils believe that staff tackle issues with bullying very effectively.
- Pupils develop positive attitudes about healthy lifestyles. Sporting achievements are celebrated and valued by the staff at the school. This helps to ensure that pupils feel the same way. They enjoy physical education lessons and there is a high take-up of the sporting clubs that are on offer to them. Leaders have recently improved the access to sport for all pupils. This means that pupils of all abilities have increasing opportunities to be active and stay fit.
- Pupils say they feel safe at the school and parents and carers overwhelmingly share the same view. They know how to keep themselves safe because they understand what risks they might face, for example when using the internet.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The vast majority of pupils show strong attitudes towards their learning in lessons. The majority demonstrate resilience when activities are challenging and respond well to the feedback they receive from teachers and teaching assistants during lessons.
- Pupils behave positively in and around school. They play and learn cooperatively, regardless of their ethnicity or background. Pupils, parents and staff agree that pupils' behaviour is good and well managed. At times, a small minority of pupils still show less positive attitudes to their learning, particularly when expected to complete work on their own. At these times they rely heavily on the guidance they are given by adults. Leaders rightly recognise that this is why behaviour is not yet outstanding, and have appropriate plans in place to strengthen this in the future.
- Pupils attend well. Strong relationships between parents and the school mean that issues with poor attendance are tackled effectively. As a result, current attendance rates are now high in all year groups.

- Exclusions are rare. On the rare occasions fixed-term exclusions have been used, they have been proportionate and led to rapid improvements in behaviour. This typifies how pupils improve their behaviour and attitudes to learning over time, because of the effectiveness of school staff. Pupils who join the school other than at the time normally expected settle quickly and rapidly learn to enjoy the strong sense of community at the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Overall, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable from their different starting points. After the previous inspection, pupils' achievement declined sharply. Leaders have now taken effective action to reverse this declining trend, so that pupils are making much stronger progress. Inconsistencies remain, however, because of the legacy of underachievement and the newness of some improvements that have been made to teaching.
- Pupils have attained levels that have been below average at the school in the past. In particular, pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics has been too low. Results in writing are stronger and were broadly average in 2016.
- Different groups of pupils make varied progress across subjects. For example, least-able pupils do not always do as well as they could in reading and mathematics. The most able pupils do well in these subjects, but could do better in writing. Despite recent signs of improvement for all groups of pupils, too few make consistently good progress from their starting points. Not enough pupils reach the higher standard by the time they leave key stage 2.
- The achievement of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium funding, including those who are most able, is too varied. This is because leaders have not analysed sharply enough the difference their use of the pupil premium grant is making. Consequently, not enough disadvantaged pupils leave the school having diminished the difference in their attainment from other pupils nationally.
- Children enter the pre-school with skills that are generally lower than those expected for their age. By the time they leave Reception, they have made reasonable progress. However, too many children do not achieve the expected level of development in mathematics. The proportion of children leaving Reception having attained a good level of development has declined over the last three years and is now below average.
- Pupils make sound progress in their phonics and attain results that are broadly in line with national averages.
- Pupils make reasonable progress through key stage 1, but often attain results that are below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Assessment information is particularly hampered by the progress made by the pupils who have entered Year 1 having not achieved a good level of development in Reception.
- The work in pupils' books and the school's current pupils' assessment tracking information demonstrate that pupils are on track to achieve much better results this year. There is also evidence that pupils are now making better progress overall, although there remain weaknesses in some groups, particularly for pupils who are

disadvantaged.

- Pupils are achieving better in writing than in reading and mathematics. This is because improvements in the teaching of writing are more embedded than in mathematics and reading.
- Pupils in the enhanced provision make good progress from their starting points. This helps them to achieve well and consistently meet their individualised, holistic targets.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not ensured that provision in the early years is consistently good. Assessments of children are not used well enough, particularly in the pre-school, to ensure that the learning tasks provided in the outdoor and indoor environments meet the needs of children. As a result, children do not make the progress that they could, including those who are disadvantaged, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. This means that children do not leave the early years well enough prepared for key stage 1.
- The pre-school's environment is not as enabling as that seen in Reception. In particular, children's interests are not captured well enough because the outdoor area is poorly resourced. This means that children do not get enough opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Staff in the pre-school make considered attempts to help children improve their communication skills. They have supported excellent relationships between children, who enjoy their time in the pre-school.
- Activities led by adults in Reception are more effective and help children to make better progress. For example, inspectors observed a successful group session led by the teacher. Children were encouraged to discuss their feelings and were guided well through effective questioning to consider the feelings of others.
- Relationships are a strength in the pre-school and Reception classes. Children develop good attitudes to learning and work and play cooperatively with each other. A large proportion of children come into the Reception class from other early years providers. Nevertheless, they settle quickly into the routines and learn to get along well with others.
- There are good links between staff and parents. Reception staff complete home visits whenever possible before children start in their classes. Regular opportunities are offered by the school to parents to help them support their children's learning. Parents appreciate this and enjoy the holistic approach of staff. Leaders work very well with other professionals, such as speech and language therapists, to ensure that there is effective provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

School details

Unique reference number	119991
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10020442

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	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	302
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Pearson
Headteacher	Trevor Marsden
Telephone number	01664 565 124
Website	www.sherardschool.co.uk
Email address	ict.admin@sherard.leics.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 April 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Sherard Primary is an above average sized primary school. The school has grown significantly since the last inspection, with much larger cohorts now entering the school in Reception. There is also a higher proportion of pupils entering the school later on in their primary education than usual.
- Since its last inspection, the school has had a new headteacher and restructured the leadership team. A new chair of the governing body has been appointed. The governing body took over responsibility for the pre-school that had previously been run by a separate committee. The school is in the advanced phases of converting to an academy.

- Most pupils are White British and the proportion of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language is low.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is slightly below average.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This provides currently for 32 pupils aged from 4 to 11 who have moderate or severe learning difficulties and sometimes profound, multiple learning difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is much higher than the national average.
- The school met the government's current floor standards, which are the government's minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress, in 2015.
- The school runs a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons across a range of subjects in all key stages and the resource base. The majority of these observations were done jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school, at playtime, lunchtime and at the beginning of the school day. They analysed pupils' work, talked with pupils and listened to a selection of them read.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject leaders and two members of the governing body, including the chair. Inspectors spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked closely at school documentation, including minutes of governing body meetings, the school's analysis of how well it is doing, the school improvement plan and assessment information about pupils' achievement.
- Inspectors took account of 40 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and a range of comments made through the free text service. There were no returns from the staff or pupil surveys.

Inspection team

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Vondra Mays	Ofsted Inspector
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Jane Green	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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