

# Silvertrees Academy Trust

Silvertrees Road, Tipton, West Midlands DY4 8NH

## Inspection dates

2–3 February 2017

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	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders do not hold teachers sufficiently enough to account for pupils' outcomes. The extent to which the governing body provides challenge to leaders is underdeveloped.
- Middle leadership is underdeveloped leaving the headteacher with too much to do. Training opportunities for leaders are limited and monitoring of teaching is not rigorous enough.
- Leaders including governors have not sufficiently evaluated the impact of pupil premium funding or the physical education (PE) and sport premium.
- Lower-attaining pupils currently in school in key stage 1 are not making enough progress, especially in mathematics.
- Teaching does not take sufficient account of pupils' different abilities and starting points, particularly for low-attaining pupils.
- Assessment information is not used sufficiently by teachers to challenge low-attaining pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, to do as well as they can.
- Children in early years are not making rapid enough progress. They do not have enough opportunity to make choices in their learning or to practise their numeracy skills.

### The school has the following strengths

- Middle-attaining and most-able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are doing well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Where pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported by additional adults they are making good progress, including in the specialist provision.
- Parents and staff who responded to surveys were overwhelmingly positive about the leadership of the headteacher.
- Phonics is taught well throughout the school.
- Pupils behave themselves well in and around the school and attend regularly.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- Pupils feel safe and secure in school. They are looked after well in an environment where bullying rarely happens.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - roles and responsibilities are distributed more evenly across the leadership team
  - training for middle leaders is enhanced to equip them more for their role and to take on additional responsibilities
  - monitoring of teaching is more rigorous and takes more account of pupils' work in their books and their outcomes
  - pupil premium and PE and sport premium expenditure is evaluated more thoroughly.
- Ensure that governors provide sufficient support and challenge by:
  - being well informed about the strengths and weaknesses of the school
  - holding the school's leaders to account for the expenditure of pupil premium and PE and sport premium
  - making sure it knows for certain that the school meets all its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding
  - making certain that the school's website contains all the information required by the Department for Education (DfE).
- Ensure that low-attaining pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make the same rapid progress as other pupils, especially in mathematics by:
  - ensuring that teaching is consistently good in classes for low-attaining pupils
  - ensuring that low-attaining pupils are consistently challenged to make very swift progress in their learning through the setting of tasks that extend their learning further
  - making use of pupil achievement information to set challenging targets for pupils and holding teachers to account for pupil outcomes.
- Improve provision and outcomes in early years by ensuring that:
  - leaders and managers are well trained to carry out their roles
  - children make more progress in their learning in reading and numeracy
  - activities give children the opportunity to make choices in learning and develop their numeracy skills.

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

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders have an overgenerous view of the school, including teaching, where their judgements are not sufficiently supported by the progress pupils are making, especially the progress of low-attaining pupils, and the work in pupils' books. Consequently, at times feedback to teachers is too generous.
- The new tracking system introduced by the headteacher has enabled leaders to measure the progress of pupils and groups of pupils in each class, but the extent to which this information informs the monitoring of teaching is in its infancy.
- Too many responsibilities fall to the headteacher as the middle leadership is inexperienced and underdeveloped. The school's financial situation means that it does not have sufficient capacity to enlarge the leadership team. The headteacher has started to develop capacity of leadership within the school although there are limited resources for the training of middle leaders.
- Performance management systems have not necessarily led to the most well-paid teaching staff taking on additional responsibilities.
- Leaders have not sufficiently evaluated the impact of additional funding such as the pupil premium and PE and sport premium. Consequently, while some disadvantaged pupils are doing well, particularly the most able, the overall difference in outcomes at the end of key stage 1 between them and other pupils nationally is not diminishing quickly enough in mathematics.
- Promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has a number of strengths. Pupils have a voice through the school council, and their cultural development has been enhanced through work on India and the celebration of festivals.
- Work on British values is developing appropriately. This was the focus of a recent assembly led by the headteacher. Older pupils were able to talk about laws and the 'Rainbow Rules'. Around the school there is an ethos of friendship and tolerance towards others. Displays reflect the diversity in the local and wider community.
- Leaders are outward looking and are part of the 'Tipton learning community' comprised of local schools. There is some external challenge through a school improvement partner but this is underdeveloped.
- Pupils are highly articulate and enthusiastic talking about the wide variety of subjects they enjoy in the curriculum. The study of materials in science has especially engaged their interest. Most-able pupils, and those who are middle attaining, who are taught in separate teaching groups for literacy and mathematics in Years 1 and 2, are doing very well. Low-attaining pupils are making less rapid progress in their groups, particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils and parents spoken to were very positive about the extra-curricular activities, clubs and educational visits. A small number thought that opportunities to use computers in the classroom were limited, although they were available in the 'Rainbow Club' before and after school.

- By the end of key stage 1, most pupils are adequately prepared for junior school having attained standards in reading and writing that compare favourably with the national average. However, they are below expectations in mathematics, except for most-able pupils who are above. Leadership of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has much strength. There is a strong culture of commitment to, and positive support for, these pupils. The specialist unit provides well for the small group of pupils preparing to reintegrate into mainstream classes. Adults provide effective support for the pupils they support. However, there is a high number of pupils on the special educational needs register and many who are identified as low attaining, who are not receiving this valuable additional support are underachieving.
- Newly qualified teachers are well supported and feel very much part of the school. Training has been tailored to meet their individual needs. Opportunities to see practice outside of school has been more limited.
- In the short time since she has been appointed, the headteacher has tackled the financial situation caused by historical over-staffing with rigour. This has led to a significant reduction of staff but means that the school is now in a position to balance its budget.
- The headteacher has secured the overwhelming support of parents and staff for her leadership. Almost all members of staff who responded to the staff survey said that the school was improving.
- The very large majority of the parents who responded to Parent View made positive comments about the headteacher's leadership of the school. Those spoken to had very few complaints and commended the school for good communication, the approachability of staff and the culture of safety. Almost all said that they would recommend the school to another parent. One parental comment, summing up the views of others, said the headteacher, 'makes herself available to parents and is very welcoming'.
- Parents who speak English as an additional language said their children had been well integrated into school.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors do not have a fully accurate view of the school. They do not offer enough challenge and are not sufficiently informed about how well different groups of pupils are doing, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They have not ensured that the school evaluates the impact of pupil premium and PE and sport premium funding. Although the school meets all its statutory responsibilities relating to safeguarding, governors do not check with enough rigour that this is the case. They have not ensured that the website complies with the DfE's requirements. They have presided over a financial shortfall which has led to a number of staffing losses. However they have the following strengths:
  - They have now recruited governors with educational and financial expertise and are tackling the finances to balance the budget with rigour.
  - They give freely of their time and visit school regularly to talk to staff and meet pupils.

- They recognise that mathematics and early years are areas for development in the school.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a strong culture of keeping pupils safe in school. Staff are highly committed and know families well. The impact of the family support worker has been significant in supporting potentially vulnerable families and children. Relevant staff are well trained and keep up to date with guidance and information. Members of staff at all levels spoken to during the inspection visit said they had been appropriately trained and knew what procedures to follow if a potential safeguarding incident arose. Parents and pupils spoken to were overwhelmingly positive that the school keeps children safe.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Teaching does not do enough to stretch and challenge lower-attaining pupils. Although pupils are streamed, planning in a range of sets does not give sufficient consideration to the variation of starting points of pupils within each class. Consequently, too often all pupils in the class receive the same worksheet and the same level of challenge.
- A number of pupils reported that work in mathematics or English was either too hard or too easy because it was too often pitched at the middle. This meant that in one class pupils had their mathematics work marked as correct all the time with no expectation of a higher challenge whereas in a literacy lesson some pupils repeatedly gained very low scores in spelling tests because the words were too challenging for them.
- Sometimes too long is spent on the introduction to activities to ensure that everyone understands what they are doing. When this happens, pupils do not get enough time to complete their writing activities because too much time has been spent by teachers explaining the task. This holds back those pupils who are ready to move to their work more quickly. Occasionally this leads to some pupil restlessness which is not consistently picked up by teachers.
- There are insufficient opportunities for problem-solving and reasoning in mathematics. Consequently pupils focus predominantly on number calculations and do not develop their problem-solving skills enough.
- Those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and are supported by adults are doing well and expectations are high. This includes pupils who are taught in the specialist provision as well as in mainstream classes. These additional adults provide good support for the pupils they are working with and provide appropriate challenge and questioning. However, a significant number of pupils on the special educational needs register are predominantly in the lower-attaining classes in Year 1 and 2. They do not receive additional support and are not receiving the same degree of high challenge from class teaching alone.
- Pupils' work is regularly checked so that teachers know how well pupils are doing. However, this does not necessarily lead to additional challenges if pupils have completed the work successfully.

- Teachers collect regular assessment information on pupils' attainment and progress, but this is not used sufficiently to set challenging targets for those pupils who need to make rapid progress in order to catch up with their peers.
- Practical equipment is used well in mathematics to support and include pupils with special educational needs and those who find learning difficult.
- Most-able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, and middle-attaining pupils are doing well because they gain access to more challenging work in their teaching groups.
- Although phonics is taught using a range of styles, strategies and schemes, pupils are doing well because of the fun approach taken by teachers and their enjoyment of practical activities. The headteacher has introduced a new phonics scheme to be used consistently throughout the school but to date that is not yet happening in every class.
- Teachers have good relationships with pupils. This leads to a positive attitudes to learning even when pupils are either struggling with work or do not find it challenging enough.
- Teachers ensure that pupils' work in books is well cared for and presented.
- Teachers show good subject knowledge, which is imparted to pupils. For example, when pupils were learning about the Great Fire of London, they explored why the fire spread so quickly and, through science experiments, which materials would be suitable to design a waterproof coat.
- Homework is set appropriately and parents have suitable guidance and information as to how they can support their children at home.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- All parents who responded to the inspection survey, Parent View, believe their children are happy in school and almost all of them believe their children feel safe. All of those who responded said their children are looked after well in school.
- School records indicate that bullying is a very rare occurrence but when it does occur leaders deal with it well. This was supported by pupils spoken to and the very large majority of parents responding to the inspection survey, Parent View.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils have a number of opportunities to take responsibilities such as 'playground buddies', 'tidy up team' and the school council. They have contributed to the 'Rainbow Rules' for behaviour. Pupils of Indian backgrounds have supported teachers in the school's recent study of India.
- Pupils of different backgrounds get on very well together. Pupils learning English as an additional language are integrated well into the school.
- Pupils have supported charities such as Children in Need and have developed 'friendship values' in school. They have celebrated festivals, for example Eid and

Chinese New Year.

- In discussions, pupils said they enjoy coming to school and participating in the range of additional clubs on offer.
- Pupils in the specialist unit have their emotional needs met well to prepare them for reintegration into mainstream classes.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good both in lessons and around the school. Systems to promote good behaviour are well established and understood by teachers and additional adults, including mid-day supervisors.
- Pupils confirmed in conversations that behaviour is consistently good in the classroom. They said there is some occasional name-calling which is dealt with well by adults
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View believe that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved.
- There have been no exclusions in recent years.
- Adults manage the behaviour well of pupils in the specialist provision to enable them to participate in tasks and activities.
- Pupils take pride in their own appearance and in the presentation of their work. They are courteous, polite and articulate and talk about their work with enthusiasm.
- Attendance, which is broadly in line with the national average, is rigorously tracked. Leaders in partnership with the family support worker are proactive in seeking ways to improve attendance. There are robust systems in place to tackle absence. Persistent absence is low.
- Pupils show consistently positive attitudes to their learning. In the lessons which enthuse them most, they find learning fun and thrive especially when they have the opportunity to actively participate. However, on occasions where there is a long introduction to the activity, pupils sometimes get restless and fidgety because they want to get on to more challenging work.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- School information on the current progress of pupils indicates that low-attaining pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, in Years 1 and 2 are not making enough progress, especially in mathematics. This is because work is too often pitched at the middle-attaining pupils.
- Attainment at the end of key stage 1 in 2016 was broadly average in reading, above average in writing but below average in mathematics. Lower-attaining pupils had made less progress than others in mathematics.
- In 2016, a higher than average proportion of most-able pupils achieved at a greater depth in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1. The proportion of most-able pupils achieving at a greater depth in reading and writing was broadly average. This was the case for both disadvantaged pupils and pupils who are not disadvantaged.

- Over time, disadvantaged pupils are diminishing the difference in attainment with other pupils nationally in reading and writing by the end of Year 2, but not in mathematics. Pupil premium funding is not having a sufficient enough impact in raising achievement in mathematics for disadvantaged pupils.
- Those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who are receiving support and challenge from additional adults are making good progress, including those in the specialist provision unit. However, the large number of pupils on the special educational needs register who are not supported, and who are predominantly in lower-attaining sets, are not making enough progress. Teachers' expectations for them are not sufficiently high enough. Outcomes at the end of Year 2 in 2016 were low for these pupils in reading and writing, and very low in mathematics.
- Most-able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, and middle-attaining pupils who are currently in Years 1 and 2 are making good, and at times very rapid, progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is as a result of being taught more challenging work in their teaching groups.
- Outcomes in phonics, based on the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard by the end of Year 1, have been consistently close to the national average.

### Early years provision

### Requires improvement

- Leadership in early years is very new. There has been insufficient time to demonstrate impact and to establish an accurate view on outcomes for children. Opportunities for training to develop the leadership role are underdeveloped.
- Children are actively engaged in activities. Although they choose from the activities on offer, all have been planned by adults. Even child-initiated sessions are planned by adults and led by adults. This leads to few opportunities for children to initiate their own play. At times there is a lack of challenge with adults floating between groups rather than focusing on the learning of specific children.
- Children do not make swift enough progress from their low starting points on entry and, based on the proportion achieving a good level of development in reading and number by the time they leave Reception, outcomes remain low so that children are not fully prepared for the start of Year 1.
- There is a purposeful, bright environment to stimulate learning, especially outside with the new play area and road layout introduced by the headteacher.
- Activities are now providing opportunities for children to develop their literacy, for example, by reading key words in the role play area, but opportunities to develop numeracy are less well established.
- Children behave well in early years. There are well-established routines. They cooperate well with adults and each other and listen carefully to instructions. Children have resilience to remain focused on tasks for some time. They are confident and enjoy their learning.
- Adults use snack time well to continue children's learning, for example rehearsing with children learning points from their morning sessions in phonics.
- Parents spoken to praised the smooth transition into early years. They welcomed the



positive partnerships established with the school and the quality of the information received.

## School details

Unique reference number	140792
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10025200

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	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	361
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keith Aston
Headteacher	Dawn Garratt
Telephone number	0121 557 1923
Website	<a href="http://www.silvertreesacademy.co.uk">www.silvertreesacademy.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:matt@silvertreesacademy.co.uk">matt@silvertreesacademy.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Silvertrees Infants is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is about one in four, which is well above the national average. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.
- There is a specialist unit on site for a small group of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and who have more complex emotional and behavioural needs.
- The 'Rainbow Club' provides support and food to pupils before and after the school day.

- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school mid-way through a key stage is very low.
- Silvertrees Academy Trust is a stand-alone academy.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are streamed in three ability sets for literacy and numeracy.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2015 after the school converted to becoming an academy.
- At the time of the inspection visit the early years coordinator had been in post for two weeks.
- The chair of the governing body was chair of the predecessor school at their most recent inspection. His total length of service in his role as chair is 32 years.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum, pupil premium, PE and sports premium or governors on its website.
- The school does not comply with DfE guidance on what academies should publish about the curriculum, pupil premium or governors.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 28 lessons or parts of lessons, of which 12 were jointly observed with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons and other activities.
- Inspectors heard pupils read during lessons.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other leaders, other members of staff and a group of pupils.
- Inspectors met the chair of the governing body and met separately with three other members of the governing body. Inspectors also met an external consultant who has been working with the school.
- Inspectors spoke to 15 parents at the school gate. In addition, they took account of 27 Parent View free text responses and 37 responses to the online questionnaire.
- Inspectors also took account of 28 responses to a staff survey.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents, including those relating to the school's self-evaluation, as well as governing body minutes, improvement plans and school information on pupils' recent attainment and progress.
- Inspectors also considered behaviour and attendance information, policies and procedures relating to special educational needs, pupil premium funding, and PE and sport premium funding, safeguarding and child protection.

## Inspection team

Mark Sims, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nicola Harwood	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Else	Ofsted Inspector
Kate Hanson	Ofsted Inspector

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