

Concord Junior School

Fife Street, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S9 1NR

Inspection dates

24–25 January 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	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	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

- Work to tackle a legacy of underperformance got off to a slow start when the academy opened. Although the pace of improvement has accelerated considerably since January 2015, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching remain. Over time, the progress pupils are making has not been strong enough to enable them to achieve well.
- School leaders and governors have not directed the use of the pupil premium funding well enough to accelerate progress for disadvantaged pupils. The difference between these pupils and others nationally is not diminishing rapidly enough.
- While pupils generally display positive attitudes to learning in class, behaviour at less structured times, such as break and lunchtime, can be unsettled.
- Despite the school's effective work in a number of areas, many parents do not have a positive view of the school.
- Leaders recognise that while attendance is improving, there is still more to do. The persistent absence of some pupils has a negative impact on the progress they are making.

The school has the following strengths

- Since the appointment of the headteacher in 2015 and the increased involvement of the executive principal, improvement has accelerated. It is clear that where school leaders have identified an area of weakness, they are relentless in their drive to secure improvement.
- Senior and middle leaders, the executive principal and the trust, have complementary skills and expertise. Leaders are robust in tackling weaker teaching. The support to improve the practice of teachers has borne fruit and is now resulting in pupils making better progress.
- The provision for pupils who are very new to speaking English is excellent. These pupils get a very positive start to school life and the rapid progress they make means that they can quickly access learning across subjects.
- Teaching in upper key stage 2 is carefully matched to the needs of pupils of all abilities and provides appropriate challenge. As a result, pupils make good gains in their learning.
- Work to engage pupils in developing their knowledge and skills through a broader curriculum has got off to a good start. Investigative work in science is strong.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils' attainment is at least in line with national expectations by:
 - ensuring that teaching is consistently strong across all curriculum subjects
 - checking that strategies leaders implement to improve teaching are used consistently well across all classes
 - further developing pupils' reasoning skills and teachers' use of effective questioning
 - sharing the good practice that exists in school and across the trust
 - continuing to support pupils to develop their language skills and vocabulary across all subjects.
- Improve the partnership between school and parents and carers by:
 - developing effective methods of communication
 - providing clear information about the progress that children are making across the curriculum
 - celebrating the success of children and the school.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers in improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils by:
 - strengthening plans for the spending of the pupil premium grant to ensure that the specific needs of individuals are well met, and any potential barriers to learning are successfully tackled
 - making sure that teachers regularly check the progress that disadvantaged pupils are making and adapt their planning and teaching accordingly to improve their progress
 - ensuring that governors rigorously check the impact of the provision for disadvantaged pupils and challenge leaders where these pupils are not catching up with other pupils nationally quickly enough.
- Improve pupils' behaviour, personal development and welfare by ensuring that:
 - robust systems are in place for addressing, following up and recording incidents of poor behaviour, so that the misbehaviour of individuals does not affect the welfare of others
 - pupils' behaviour in the playground is of a high standard and that low-level but persistent incidents are significantly reduced.
- Further improve the attendance of those pupils and groups of pupils who are persistently absent from school.

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

- Since the appointment of a new headteacher in 2015, all leaders have worked successfully together to gather an accurate understanding of the school's performance. They have devised clear plans to address complex challenges. While leaders' actions are now making a difference, this has not been the case for long enough to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes to good.
- The headteacher is ambitious in her drive to improve teaching and learning. She is highly focused on implementing effective teaching strategies throughout school and is accurate in her evaluation of the school's performance.
- There has been a focus on raising achievement for all, but leaders have not taken the needs of the disadvantaged pupils well enough into account. They have not used the pupil premium funding to target support sufficiently well for these pupils, many of whom have very low starting points. The progress that disadvantaged pupils are making is not improving and so the gap between these pupils and other pupils nationally is not diminishing.
- Since the school became an academy, leaders have had to make some difficult decisions to bring about improvements from a challenging starting point. During this work, an effective partnership has not developed between leaders and parents. Leaders have not communicated their ambition for the pupils or the resulting improvements in the work the pupils are producing clearly or regularly enough. Some parents are worried about aspects of school life and feel unable to communicate their concerns to school leaders.
- The experienced executive principal's increased support has been very effective in contributing to the school's improvement. The expertise he offers in analysing pupil performance to check progress, his good understanding of the context of the schools in the trust and his honest, precise and accurate evaluations are instrumental in the recent improvements the school is making.
- Middle leaders work effectively in reviewing and evaluating their subject. Their strong subject knowledge is supporting teachers in developing their practice.
- The leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective and strong partnerships exist with the infant school. The work between the two schools ensures a smooth transition for pupils and a sharing of good practice. The leader supports teachers in planning for pupils' needs. As a result, these pupils are making good progress. Leaders target the additional funding for these pupils successfully.
- There is a robust programme for managing the performance of teachers and leaders, with targets tightly linked to actions identified for school improvement.
- Leaders use the primary school physical education and sport funding well to engage pupils in more sporting activities. Pupils have opportunities to take part in sports with other schools and speak positively about this.
- While a focus has been given to rapidly improving pupils' English and mathematics

skills, leaders have also been clear in their aim to give pupils opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills across a wider curriculum. The impact of a recent focus on science is clearly visible in pupils' books. Displays around school show that pupils have opportunities to learn across a wide range of subjects. This work is enhanced by extra-curricular clubs and enrichment opportunities, such as school visits and work with Sheffield Children's University.

- Overall leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. They put emphasis on the school values of trust, respect, friendship, forgiveness and safety, as well as developing pupils' understanding of life in modern Britain.
- Actions that leaders have taken to improve behaviour are evident in the improved attitudes to learning in most lessons. However, further work is needed to improve behaviour at less structured times of the day.
- The trust is passionate in its vision for pupils in the school. The trust demonstrates a clear capacity to provide appropriate support in terms of leadership, finance and staffing, as well as challenge to leaders to provide the highest achievement possible.

Governance of the school

- Trust directors identified that previous arrangements for governance were not effectively supporting school improvement. They have taken direct responsibility for the governance of the school so that they can better hold leaders to account and secure the improvement needed.
- Directors have a strong understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. There is careful analysis of performance through visits to school, reports from the executive headteacher, visits from external partners and a clear view of the school's context.
- Directors check that the school's systems of appraisal are effectively applied.
- Although the trust directors have used pupil progress information to carefully track whole-school improvement, they have not checked the use of the pupil premium funding to ensure that it has been effective in raising the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils. They have not been aware that these pupils are not making enough progress.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that safeguarding policies and practice are up to date and high priority. They provide regular update training for staff and there is a clear system of information sharing with new staff. Leaders work closely with other agencies to make sure that pupils and families have the support they need.
- All staff are fully aware that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and know what to do if they have a concern.
- Robust systems are in place for monitoring pupils' absence, with careful checking on a daily basis and follow up when pupils are absent for longer periods of time.

- Variability in the quality of teaching has impacted on pupils' progress over time. Ambition to diminish the difference between the progress of pupils in school and pupils nationally is visible in the improvements in pupils' current work, though this is still not consistent enough to result in good outcomes overall. In particular, teachers have not adapted their planning and teaching well enough to the needs of the disadvantaged pupils to improve their progress.
- Teaching in upper key stage 2 is successful in promoting pupils' progress in English and mathematics. This is because work is well matched to the very differing needs of pupils to ensure that every child is challenged, productivity is high and attitudes to learning are good.
- Learning in lower key stage 2 is more variable. Teachers are applying the new strategies and systems directed by leaders, but with varying success. Sometimes explanations are not clear enough and pupils are not always given opportunities to develop their reasoning skills in subjects, including English, which results in progress not being consistently strong. Sometimes, where teaching is not as effective, pupils can drift off task.
- Improving pupil progress in mathematics was one of the first priorities addressed when the headteacher took up post in 2015. The impact of the building of skills over the last two years, and a teaching focus on reasoning, applying skills and problem solving is now clear in pupils' work. As these skills are being embedded, pupils show confidence and work well collaboratively to take on new challenge. For example, a group of Year 6 pupils were using their new knowledge of Pi and applying their skills effectively to their work about shape. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils and are careful to challenge pupils of all abilities in mathematics.
- Many pupils enter the school at a very early stage of learning to speak English. Pupils who need to rapidly increase their vocabulary have the opportunity to spend morning lessons in the EAL (English as an Additional Language) intervention classroom. Skilled staff support the pupils successfully in work across the curriculum, so that they are able to make a smooth transfer to work in the main classrooms. This environment is welcoming and purposeful and pupils make good progress.
- Language differences have, in the past, been a barrier to pupils' progress in reading and spelling. Teachers make sure pupils read regularly and often, and there is a balance of focused reading strategies, for example in phonics, and developing an understanding of and enjoyment in texts. Children read to inspectors with interest, concentration and enjoyment and were able to talk with confidence about the books they were reading.
- The school has a high number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers and support staff adapt their plans carefully to make sure that these pupils are well supported in their learning, while also encouraging pupils to become independent learners.
- As the teaching has improved, the most able pupils have quickly accessed new ways of learning and thrive on the challenge they are given. These pupils have made the most rapid progress from their starting points.
- Teachers are very keen to make sure that they engage pupils in memorable learning

experiences. A large emphasis has been given to the development of scientific skills. Teaching is well matched to age-related expectations and challenges to deepen understanding are used effectively. Pupils spoke with animation about their work with Sheffield University. As part of work based on a novel pupils in Year 6 are reading, the pupils had the exciting opportunity to dissect a heart to see how it worked. Work in art is of very high quality across the school – the learning environment is vibrant and celebrates work across the curriculum. Work across other areas of the curriculum is developing, though as with other aspects of learning, this is variable across school.

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 speak with confidence and cooperate well with each other in class. They take pride in the work they produce in their books and for displays in classrooms and corridors.
- School doors are opened early so that pupils can come in and start their first activities independently. This promotes a calm and industrious start to the day.
- A breakfast club provides a positive start to the day and is available for all pupils.
- Pupils learn about a variety of ways to keep safe, for example about keeping safe online, through lessons and topic events. Pupils say that they feel safe.
- Some pupils express that they do not like playtime. Although equipment was purchased for use at lunchtimes, a limited amount is available and pupils find it hard to find something purposeful to do.
- The school values are understood by everyone and are high-profile throughout the school day. Year 4 pupils spoke confidently about their learning as to life in modern Britain, saying for example: 'It is important because we are all different and it is important in life to all get along with each other.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- A zero-tolerance approach is taken for extreme behaviour. However, sanctions for other incidents are less clear, and the systems to check and follow up problems are not robust enough, meaning that some altercations are missed, or patterns in behaviour not recognised.
- Pupils say that there is lots of arguing and sometimes fighting at playtime. However, they say there is very little bullying, and that when it does take place it is dealt with strictly by staff. Adults keep a high profile at breaktimes to remind pupils about their behaviour towards each other.
- In class, pupils generally display positive attitudes to learning. These improved attitudes have a good impact on the progress they are making.
- Sometimes pupils arrive at school late, as they have to travel to school by bus from other parts of Sheffield. Teachers make sure that they settle quickly and have the

opportunity to catch up on any activities missed.

- Attendance overall is showing steady improvement and is now closer to the national average. Persistent absence is still high, though the school's focus and support for particular pupils has meant that this has improved since September.
- Leaders have taken a hard line on inappropriate behaviour, as they do not want it to affect pupils' progress. Consequently, exclusion figures rose last year, but are now steadily declining.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2016, Year 6 outcomes were well below the national average in most measures of attainment and progress. Historic underperformance and slow progress through their first part of key stage 2 meant that these pupils had too far to catch up.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils were extremely low last year, with only 5% achieving the expected standard in reading and their progress significantly below that of other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. The use of the pupil premium funding was not directed well enough to improve outcomes for these pupils. Current progress for disadvantaged pupils of all abilities is still not rapid enough to diminish the large difference between them and other pupils nationally, particularly in writing.
- Pupils' work, observations of learning and the school's robust tracking system show that many pupils have made improved progress this academic year. Leaders are very aware that the pace of progress needs to be rapid to be certain of better outcomes at the end of this year.
- Writing across the upper part of key stage 2 shows an improving picture, with many more pupils working at the expected standard, and some at higher standards. This is partly due to a strong focus on the provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language and the building of language skills through consistently effective modelling.
- Work to improve writing has had a positive impact on reading. Pupils, including those with low prior attainment, have books that are well matched to their skills so that they can read with fluency and enjoyment.
- The depth of understanding and application of number in mathematics is now better developed to provide more challenge for pupils of all abilities. Pupils' work shows that they are becoming successful mathematicians, able to reason and solve problems with the skills they have learned.
- Support given to pupils who have special needs and/or disabilities is enabling them to make good progress. This includes effective transition arrangements, ensuring that there is seamless progression of work from the infant to the junior school, work carefully matched to pupils' needs and close attention to progress being made.
- The most able pupils are challenged well to reach greater depth in their learning in upper key stage 2, though there is variation in this across the school.

School details

Unique reference number	140609
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10023793

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	Brigantia Learning Trust
Chair	David Drayson
Headteacher	Michelle Kouni
Telephone number	01142 495050
Website	www.concordschool.net
Email address	enquiries@concordschool.net
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Concord Junior School became part of a multi-academy trust in March 2014. In September 2015, the trust was renamed as Brigantia Learning Trust.
- The school met the government's floor standards in 2016.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is above average.
- Approximately half of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, with a quarter being of Roma heritage. Many Roma pupils enter school with little prior education. They sometimes enter the school at times other than those which are typical. Many pupils do not live in the local area, but travel to school from other parts of Sheffield.
- Many pupils enter school with little English. Approximately 40% of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities is double the national average. The proportion of pupils with an education,

health and care plan is lower than average.

- A breakfast club is available for all pupils every day.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils learning in a range of lessons, some alongside the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work across the curriculum. For English and mathematics this scrutiny of work took place alongside middle leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including: assessment information; school improvement planning; school self-evaluation; minutes of meetings of the trust board; external reports; information about the performance of teachers; documents relating to behaviour and safety; and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Meetings took place with representatives from the school, the executive principal, the headteacher, middle leaders, staff, representatives from the governing body and groups of pupils. A phone call took place with the external school improvement partner.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the school and also considered the 22 responses on Parent View and information in letters addressed to the inspection team.

Inspection team

Kate Rowley, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Simon McCarthy	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Soutar	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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