

Somerlea Park Junior School

Bank Street, Somercotes, Alfreton, Derbyshire DE55 4JE

Inspection dates

16–17 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Actions taken by leaders and governors have not been effective in improving the quality of teaching and ensuring that pupils make good progress.
- For too long, pupils have not reached the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave the school.
- Leaders and governors lack rigour in checking how well additional funding is used to improve the achievement of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders and governors have been slow to identify key priorities. They do not work sufficiently well together to check how effectively the school is moving towards achieving its aims.
- Governors are not sufficiently effective in determining the strategic direction of the school.
- Leaders have not improved teaching to be consistently good. Inconsistencies remain and the amount of progress that pupils make varies. There are differences in performance between groups of pupils.
- There are weaknesses in the curriculum. The teaching of religious education is too infrequent.
- Leaders do not ensure that pupils develop their writing and mathematical skills widely.
- The school's strategies are not effective in promoting good attendance.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher has a clear focus on improving teaching and learning.
- She has united staff in a common sense of purpose and strengthened leadership roles.
- Pupils say they feel safe. Staff promote pupils' personal and social development well.
- Recent changes are promoting pupils' enjoyment of reading.
- There are effective systems to check pupils' progress.
- The curriculum is enhanced by interesting experiences which pupils enjoy.

Full report

In accordance with sections 44(1) and 13(3) 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 the leadership and management of the school in order to accelerate the rate of improvement by ensuring that:
 - governors develop their strategic roles and skills in aiding school improvement and holding school leaders to account
 - school leaders and governors systematically check how well the school is progressing towards its key priorities
 - additional funding is used effectively to improve the achievement of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - middle and subject leaders, including those responsible for the provision of special educational needs, evaluate and improve the quality of teaching
 - strategies to improve attendance are more far-reaching and have a greater impact on overall school attendance
 - religious education is taught frequently, develops pupils' spiritual and cultural development, and plays a greater part in preparing pupils for life in modern Britain.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make faster progress by making sure that teachers consistently:
 - provide lower-ability pupils with tasks and resources which help them to achieve well
 - receive good guidance to help them to improve their teaching of specific groups of pupils, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - develop pupils' writing skills fully by encouraging pupils to write for a wider range of purposes
 - provide pupils with meaningful tasks across a range of subjects to promote a greater depth of mathematical understanding.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- There is a long legacy of underperformance because the rate of improvement has been too slow. Not enough has been done to improve the quality of teaching quickly. Consequently, pupils are not well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Leaders and governors have not implemented plans for improvement rapidly enough. There is confusion over how monitoring and evaluation activities are to be carried out and by whom. As a result, the progress towards the milestones identified in improvement plans is not checked regularly.
- The pupil premium funding has not been used effectively to improve the achievement of eligible pupils. School leaders are in the process of implementing the recommendations from the external review of this aspect. However, governors are not yet sufficiently rigorous in questioning school leaders about the impact of additional funding in helping pupils to do better, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school's policy for the teaching of religious education is not put in to practice. Lessons are not frequent enough. This limits pupils' cultural understanding of a range of faiths. It affects the development of the values of tolerance and respect towards those from different backgrounds. This means that an essential element of pupils' preparation for life in modern Britain is lacking.
- Little improvement has been made to the below-average attendance of some pupils. Leaders are not successful in helping all parents to see the importance of good attendance on their children's achievement.
- Too much improvement has relied upon the acting headteacher. The roles of subject and middle leaders are evolving but have taken time to establish and have depended upon external support from the local authority.
- Subject and middle leaders are not sufficiently involved in leading improvements in their subjects, including the evaluation of the quality of teaching. They do not provide teachers with the guidance they need to improve their teaching for particular groups of pupils and in specific subjects.
- Because of this, the differences in performance between groups of pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are not diminishing quickly enough.
- The development of writing and mathematics across the curriculum is limited.
- The acting headteacher is determined to improve teaching and learning. She has introduced a range of new initiatives. Staff feel well supported and are enthusiastic about improvement because school leaders involve them in understanding the school's aims.
- Leaders use effective systems to check how well pupils are doing.
- The primary physical education and sport funding is used effectively to improve teachers' skills and increase pupils' participation in physical activities, including during

the lunchtimes.

- The curriculum is enriched well by trips to outside locations and visitors which inspire pupils' learning and promote their enjoyment. These activities, along with creative and musical opportunities, make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has not been effective enough in challenging the work of senior leaders to make rapid improvements to the quality of teaching and to pupils' achievement.
- Governors are not well informed about their duties and their role in determining the strategic direction of the school.
- Some aspects of governors' training are not up to date. Offers of support and training from the local authority have not been used effectively to improve governors' practice and skills.
- Governors do not check the school's progress towards its key priorities systematically. This prevents the governing body from forming a clear picture of the progress that school leaders are making.
- Governors have not been stringent in ensuring that information about their roles and responsibilities on the school's website are compliant.
- There is not a clear enough analysis of the impact of additional funding on pupils' achievement. Although governors analyse data and ask questions about pupils' progress, their approach is not rigorous enough to challenge school leaders to improve provision.
- Individual members of the governing body have provided support to help the school through a difficult period in the absence of the headteacher. The new chair of governors is now beginning to address gaps in governors' skills and training in order for the governing body to carry out its duties corporately.
- Governors review school policies and check safeguarding systems regularly. They check site security and have made recent improvements.

Safeguarding

- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that all staff understand the school's systems and know how to keep children safe. Training for staff keeps them updated and is regular and relevant.
- Leaders record any child protection concerns thoroughly. They keep detailed information about their actions to promote children's welfare. They work well with families and external agencies.
- Pupils learn about safety issues in lessons and assemblies, including strategies to prevent bullying. They are helped to understand how to keep themselves safe online and how to avoid any potential risks. Staff and leaders record and follow up any incidents that do occur. They make sure that pupils know how to raise any worries they

may have.

- The school makes good use of professionals, such as the local police force and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), to raise the awareness of potential dangers, such as exploitation and drug misuse. In this way, pupils receive good guidance on how to keep themselves safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, which leads to variation in the amount of progress pupils make.
- Teachers do not consistently provide the right level of task or resources to help the lower-ability pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make good progress. This means these pupils sometimes do not build upon basic skills sufficiently well or complete their work successfully.
- The extra help that some pupils receive, especially those who need to catch up, is not always effective in accelerating their progress. This is because leaders do not make sure that staff are clear about what pupils should achieve.
- Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to extend their writing in a wide range of ways. Pupils do not write as well in other subjects as they do in their English books.
- Teachers do not identify enough ways to use mathematics across the curriculum in order to deepen pupils' understanding and to encourage pupils to apply their skills in meaningful ways.
- The provision for the most able pupils is improving. Teachers now provide work that is more suitably pitched to help these pupils to reach their full potential, particularly in mathematics. For example, during the inspection, the most able pupils worked on investigations and problem solving to deepen their understanding of averages and measures.
- Teachers promote the enjoyment of reading. The newly refurbished library and regular reading sessions are popular with pupils. There is a more unified approach to the teaching of reading skills and involving parents in supporting their children's reading. As a result, pupils are beginning to make better progress in the subject.
- Staff focus well on developing pupils' vocabulary as well as their speaking and listening skills. They encourage pupils to contribute and they ask relevant questions to check pupils' understanding. Staff use what they know from pupils' previous learning to correct any misconceptions.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The school's motto of 'Progress, Respect, Independence, Determination, Excellence' reflects the school's drive to raise pupils' aspirations. Pupils are proud of the badges they wear to demonstrate the part they play in the school community.
- Most pupils take pride in their work and are particularly pleased to gain their 'pen licences'. They value the help they receive from staff to improve and know that it is important to do well. Pupils like receiving recognition for their achievements.
- Staff promote positive relationships. They provide a good level of emotional support and pastoral care for those pupils who need it. This has a positive effect on building pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
- Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school. They know about the different forms of bullying, including the potential risks presented by the internet and social media. Pupils say that bullying does not happen often but, when it does, it is dealt with by staff.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because not all pupils and their families have positive attitudes towards good attendance. The number of pupils who stay away from school frequently is reducing, but attendance remains below average. This affects the continuity of pupils' learning and the amount of progress they make.
- Most pupils behave well. They concentrate in lessons and try their best. They maintain the same level of behaviour in other activities, including when attending the breakfast club. Pupils understand the school's rules and sanctions and say that they are fair.
- Pupils show tolerance towards those who find it difficult to behave well. School leaders have tightened the ways in which unacceptable behaviour is dealt with. They have raised expectations of how pupils should behave, with a positive effect on improving pupils' behaviour overall.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- From often low starting points on entry to Year 3, pupils do not make enough good progress as they move through the school to reach the expected levels of attainment by the end of Year 6. This is because rates of progress fluctuate from class to class and there are differences in performance between groups of pupils.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils in Year 6 who reached the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics was well below average and they were not well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- In 2016, pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds did less well than their classmates and other pupils nationally. This is because leaders have not used the pupil premium funding effectively to raise pupils' achievement. School leaders now track the progress these pupils make carefully and identify those who need extra help. However, support

is not yet precise enough to ensure that all make the accelerated progress needed in order to catch up.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make varied rates of progress. Sometimes, tasks and resources are not sufficiently matched to these pupils' needs in order for them to do well.
- In 2016, the percentage of the most able pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, who reached the higher standards at the end of Year 6, was below average. This is because insufficient attention was paid to providing these pupils with work that was well matched to their ability. However, these pupils are now being suitably challenged to help them to make better progress.
- The progress of some pupils is now beginning to speed up because school leaders make sure that teachers know what pupils should achieve from term to term. They set targets for pupils and staff to work towards and are establishing more consistent approaches to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics.

School details

Unique reference number	112498
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10025822

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	164
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gillian Bradley
Headteacher	Karen Joyce
Telephone number	01773 602258
Website	www.somerleapark.org.uk
Email address	headteacher@somerleapark.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29–30 April 2015

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about governors' business and financial interests, or the impact of the expenditure for the pupil premium funding for the academic year 2015 to 2016 on its website.
- The school is smaller than average.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- In 2016, the school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced staff and leadership changes.

The headteacher has been absent from the school since November 2015, due to ill-health. The deputy headteacher has been leading the school as acting headteacher since January 2016.

- The school is part of the Synergy for Derbyshire teaching school alliance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in nine lessons, three of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also observed the teaching of small groups of pupils. In all, seven members of staff were seen teaching.
- Inspectors looked at samples of work from all year groups. They talked to pupils about their work during lessons and listened to pupils from Year 3 and Year 6 read. Inspectors met with groups of pupils.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school and at playtimes and lunchtimes. An inspector observed the breakfast club and after-school sports activities.
- Inspectors held meetings with governors, school leaders and staff, and a representative from the local authority.
- There were too few responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, for inspectors to analyse. However, inspectors took into account parents' written comments and the responses to a recent survey for parents conducted by the school. An inspector spoke with some parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors analysed the five responses to the questionnaire submitted by school staff.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's systems and documentation relating to safeguarding. They looked at information about pupils' attainment and progress, and about their attendance. Inspectors looked at school improvement plans and evidence of the monitoring of teaching.

Inspection team

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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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