

Southdale Church of England Junior School

Southdale Road, Ossett, West Yorkshire WF5 8BA

Inspection dates

6–7 June 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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, the school's effectiveness has declined. Much staffing turbulence has led to weaknesses in leadership and the quality of teaching. As a result, pupils have not made the progress that they should.
- Although improving, there is still variability in the quality of teaching. The teaching of writing and mathematics, in particular, requires improvement.
- Assessments of pupils' skills and knowledge are not used effectively to plan work that meets pupils' varying needs and abilities. Too often, work lacks challenge, particularly for the most able pupils. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes too low.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their writing and mathematical skills in subjects beyond English and mathematics.
- Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced. Pupils' skills and knowledge in other subjects beyond English and mathematics are underdeveloped.
- Over time, leaders have not used the pupil premium effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils do well. Although this is now improving, disadvantaged pupils' achievement still lags behind others.
- Although much improved, governors do not hold senior leaders rigorously to account for pupils' progress. They are too reliant on information provided by senior leaders.

The school has the following strengths

- The interim headteacher is having a significantly positive impact on the school. Staff morale is high. Parents and pupils acknowledge the school is improving.
- Leaders and governors are clear about the school's weaknesses. They know what they need to do to bring about sustained improvement. Improvements in teaching, pupils' progress and their attendance are already evident.
- Pupils are eager to learn, show good attitudes and behave well. Pupils feel safe and confident that adults care for them.
- Leaders and governors have successfully created a mutually respectful school community. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their skills as leaders. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Good leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is helping pupils to make much better progress.
- The local authority provides sustained and effective support for the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that they are consistently good by:
 - ensuring that all staff have the highest expectations of what pupils can and should achieve
 - using assessment information about pupils' progress to plan learning effectively so that all groups of pupils are challenged to make rapid progress
 - further developing the curriculum beyond English and mathematics so that pupils enjoy a broader and more balanced curriculum and pupils have more opportunities to deepen their understanding, skills and knowledge in a wide range of subjects
 - providing pupils with opportunities to follow through ideas and develop resilience as independent learners, particularly the most able
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to write at length in subjects other than English
 - ensuring that there are more rigorous communication and recording systems in place to maximise the impact of teaching assistants
 - ensuring that high standards of presentation and neatness are insisted upon across the school.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
 - developing the skills of governors so that they do not rely on information provided by senior leaders and hold the school to account with rigour
 - further improving the quality of provision for disadvantaged pupils so that they make consistently good progress across the year groups
 - making sure that the curriculum is broad and balanced so that pupils develop good skills and knowledge in subjects other than English and mathematics.

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

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced a long period of turbulence and instability in staffing, including leadership. Over this time, leadership has not been strong enough to prevent a significant decline in both the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. In 2016, outcomes were weak. Although the school is now starting to improve, there is still some way to go to ensure that pupils achieve well.
- The recent provision of interim headship, financially supported by the local authority, has already resulted in significant improvements. Leaders and governors are clear about what needs to be done to address the weaknesses at the school. They have acted effectively to put in place monitoring and performance management structures needed to address the inconsistencies in teaching. Although these systems are beginning to have a positive impact, insufficient time has passed to ensure that they are embedded. Teaching is not yet good.
- Over time, leaders and governors have not ensured that pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils are not offered a consistently rich and varied diet of learning that stimulates and interests them. Leaders and governors are aware of this and are already taking effective steps to address it through careful, yet urgent, training and a detailed curriculum review. Pupils report that they have noticed and welcome these developments.
- Historically, the pupil premium funding has not been used effectively. However, the newly appointed 'pupil premium champion', working with governors and staff, has put in place effective structures and monitoring processes to ensure that disadvantaged pupils access the full range of opportunities at the school. Their progress in lessons is also checked more rigorously. Their attendance is also improving. As a result, disadvantaged pupils now are making better progress. Even so, there is still some way to go to ensure that recent improvements for these pupils are sustained and, therefore, achieve well.
- The leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also increasingly effective. The recently appointed leader is clear that all staff are teachers of special educational needs. Effectively supported by the interim headteacher, governors and the local authority, she monitors their progress carefully. Advice and training for teachers and teaching assistants is helping them to develop and improve their teaching. As a result, pupils are now making better progress. Additional funding is now being used effectively.
- Parents, although positive and generally supportive, acknowledge that there has been much turbulence, particularly around leadership, and that this has adversely affected the service the school offers. However, they report that the school is now improving and that communications and the 'visibility' of leaders are much improved.
- The life of the school is underpinned by a clearly articulated set of values that are rooted in tolerance, kindness and an awareness of the needs of others. It is supported by a wide range of extra-curricular activities and trips that are open to all. Leaders and governors, effectively supported by the local authority and the local church, are

dedicated to ensuring that the school serves and reflects the community. In this respect, the school prepares pupils very effectively for life in modern Britain.

- The leadership of support for pupils' well-being and care is effective. The school has a firm focus on ensuring that every child and young person is well looked after and any barriers to learning are removed. The communication and recording systems are strong. The school's links with outside agencies are effective.
- Leaders are deploying the additional sports and physical education (PE) funding effectively. A wide range of sports and physical activities is offered to all pupils in and out of school time. External expertise is being used effectively to improve staff skills and ensure future improvement. However, leaders and governors are aware that there is still more to be done to ensure that all pupils have access to this important aspect of their physical and mental development.
- The school is bright and tidy and there are attractive displays of pupils' work. There are regular celebrations of pupils' successes in assembly and tutor time. All of these underline current leaders' dedication to raising pupils' aspirations and confidence.

Governance of the school

- Current governors are aware of the weaknesses at the school. They are realistic and robust in their analysis of what needs to be done. However, in the past, they have not ensured that senior leaders have moved promptly to address the key areas that needed improvement.
- Although developing, governors' links with leadership beyond the senior team are not thorough enough. As a result, although improving, governors are still too reliant on information from the senior team when they make their judgements on how well the school is doing and what needs to be done to address key weaknesses.
- Governors take their responsibilities for ensuring that all members of the school community are safe very seriously. Working with senior leaders, governors foster and ensure a culture of safeguarding at the school.
- Governors have a very clear vision for the school and the way it should serve its community. Working with senior leaders, they ensure that the school keeps a creative and effective balance between its distinctive Church of England identity and being a school that is open, welcoming and engaged with all.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. This is underpinned by a strong Christian ethos and very rigorous and effective systems, checks and training for staff.
- Staff are very alert to their responsibilities and of the systems that the school has put in place to support pupils and keep them safe.
- The school knows its pupils well. As a result, staff are able to move promptly and effectively to address any issues that affect pupils' learning or well-being as they arise.
- The senior leader with responsibility for safeguarding is committed to securing pupils'

safety and well-being. There is a focus on ensuring that all pupils receive the support they need. This includes working effectively with outside agencies and with parents and carers.

- Senior leaders ensure that accurate records are kept of all aspects of safeguarding.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement because expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high enough. There is too much variability in the quality of teaching and learning between classes in the same year and across the school. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils and those who are disadvantaged.
- Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to develop their independence and resilience as learners. Too often they wait for adult instruction before they move on to their next activity or topic. This has an adverse impact on learning and progress. This is particularly the case for most-able pupils.
- The curriculum beyond English and mathematics is not developed enough. Pupils do not access a consistently rich, deep and interesting curriculum beyond these 'core' subjects.
- Teaching does not ensure that pupils' work is presented neatly. There is variability in teachers' and teaching assistants' expectations of what constitutes neat work. This is particularly the case in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Although there are improvements in the quality of writing as a result of teachers' actions, particularly in Years 5 and 6, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write at length in subjects other than English. As a result, they do not develop the habits of writing in sufficient detail to explore new ideas and extend their thinking.
- Although examples of good practice were seen during the inspection, teachers and other staff do not use questioning consistently and effectively enough to check pupils' understanding and ensure that all pupils make good and better progress. Too often, questions focus on 'what' rather than 'why' and 'how'. As a result, opportunities are lost to explore and enjoy challenging ideas and resolve more complex problems.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed in their support of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They work closely with the teacher and contribute effectively to these pupils' progress. However, their more general support in class is not as focused. Communication and recording systems between teachers and teaching assistants are not sufficiently developed. Teachers do not ensure that teaching assistants' observations and assessments of individual and groups of pupils' progress is captured.
- Teachers are aware of those pupils in their classes who are disadvantaged and may need extra support. However, they do not take sufficient account of the specific needs of some of these pupils in their planning. They do not check carefully enough that these pupils are making the progress that they should.
- Homework is regularly set and pupils take pride in completing their research and projects at home. A recent project and set of tasks to be undertaken at home on

ancient Egypt resulted in practical and written work of real interest.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and are confident that if they had any difficulties they would be promptly and effectively dealt with by adults at the school.
- Pupils report that bullying is very rare and that they understand the range of forms that bullying can take, including online bullying. Pupils told inspectors that they were confident that should incidents of bullying occur they would be dealt with promptly and effectively by staff at the school.
- The programme of sessions and activities to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well developed. Key areas such as e-safety, healthy eating, safety, respect and tolerance are discussed in tutor time and during dedicated sessions.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to take on roles of responsibility and get involved with charity work. The school's links with Tanzania, for example, which is supported by the Church of England Diocese of Leeds, have given pupils many opportunities to raise funds and communicate with their peers in Africa. This has helped them develop their understanding of their roles and responsibilities as citizens of Britain and the world.
- The assembly and collective worship programme at the school is carefully constructed and effective. It reinforces the key messages of the school and encourages pupils to be responsible and respectful for and of themselves and others. Pupils report that they enjoy worship and the way it emphasises the success of pupils in the school. Music and singing are key aspects of collective worship. Pupils sing readily, well and with gusto!
- The school has not been adversely affected by the extensive building work that is currently taking place. The school's environment is tidy, bright and attractive and there are many examples of pupils' work on the walls. Pupils report that they are proud of the way their school looks. They take pride in their environment.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils move around the currently restricted site with care and consideration for others. They are cheerful and polite. They are very ready to help and guide each other and visitors. They are open and confident and able to speak with animation about their learning and aspirations for the future.
- Classrooms are generally orderly. Pupils show respect for each other. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. Inspectors saw very few examples of low-level disruption. These took place when the pace of learning slowed.
- The school keeps detailed and effective records of racist incidents, bullying and attendance. Leaders evaluate the information they collect carefully. This helps them to

target resources and helps measure the impact of their actions on individuals and groups of pupils. As a result of these actions, attendance is improving rapidly and incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with firmly and humanely.

- Attendance is slightly above the national average. The school works hard to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. Staff are skilled and tenacious in engaging with families and pupils who, from time to time, find regular attendance challenging.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, standards reached by the end of Year 6 have significantly declined. Weaknesses in teaching and leadership over time have impacted negatively on pupils' achievement. While achievement is now starting to improve, from their starting points, current pupils do not make consistently good progress and, consequently, outcomes require improvement.
- At the end of key stage 2 in 2016, outcomes were weak. This was particularly the case in writing and mathematics. In these subjects, a below average proportion of pupils reached the expected standards for their age. Their progress was too slow. Since then, staff have worked with increasing success to address these weaknesses. For example, carefully targeted additional support in English and mathematics is now in place for pupils currently in Years 5 and 6. Inspection evidence shows that these actions are having a positive impact. Progress in these year groups is much improved. Pupils' workbooks show improvements in both writing and mathematics. This improvement is particularly marked for disadvantaged pupils.
- Achievement in writing and mathematics requires improvement. Pupils do not write at length or in sufficient detail often enough. Opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills, as well as to use and apply their mathematical skills as part of work in other curriculum subjects, are underdeveloped.
- Pupils do better in reading. An above average proportion of pupils in Year 6 met and exceeded the expected standards of attainment. The school's approach to reading is increasingly focused and effective. Staff work closely together to plan reading work. They ensure that plans take appropriate account of pupils' varying abilities. As a result, pupils are appropriately stretched and challenged. Pupils are encouraged to read at home with their parents.
- The achievement of the most able pupils requires improvement. In 2016, too few pupils achieved the higher levels of attainment, especially in writing and mathematics. Increasingly accurate information collected about the progress of different groups of pupils is helping to ensure that the most able make better progress. Even so, expectations of what these pupils can achieve are still not high enough to enable them to reach the standards they are capable of.
- In 2016, disadvantaged pupils made too little progress. Improvements to the provision for this group are already helping current pupils to make much better progress. However, the quality of teaching across the year groups is still variable and this prevents them from making consistently good progress and to catch up with others.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making similar progress to that of their peers but this is also now speeding up. Provision is now well

led. Staff more rigorously check their progress. Interventions to help them improve are prompt and focused.

School details

Unique reference number	108246
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10032022

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	319
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jean Ross
Interim headteacher	Cathy Greenaway
Telephone number	01924 277 965
Website	www.southdalecofe.co.uk
Email address	admin@southdale.wakefield.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	December 2012

Information about this school

- The school is slightly larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Apart from one mixed-age class in Years 3 and 4, pupils are taught in single-aged classes.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion with an education, health and care plan is similar to the national average.
- The school is a member of the Education Ossett Community Trust (EOCT). This is a loose federation of local schools, including the secondary school, Ossett Academy. These schools work together to develop joint staff training and to help assure the

accuracy of teacher judgements of the quality of pupils' work.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum, the impact of pupil premium spending or ensuring a clear link to performance information on the Department for Education on its website.
- There have been significant changes to staffing and the senior leadership team has been formed during the last few months. The local authority has funded two interim headteachers. The current interim headteacher has been in post for a few weeks.
- Building work is being undertaken at the school which has meant that some areas of the school are inaccessible. This has temporarily reduced the amount of space available to the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in all classes across the school. The lead inspector observed learning jointly with the interim headteacher and deputy headteacher in Years 5 and 6.
- Inspectors talked with pupils in lessons and around the school. They also looked at a significant sample of their work. They listened to pupils read in all years across the school. Inspectors also spoke more formally with pupils from each year in the school to explore their attitudes to learning and safety. The lead inspector also met with members of the school council.
- The lead inspector met with the interim headteacher and deputy headteacher, with six governors, including the chair of the local governing body, and with the school's middle leaders to discuss the school's progress and the welfare of pupils.
- The lead inspector also met with an officer of Wakefield local authority to discuss the impact of the support provided to the school.
- Inspectors took into account 45 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. The lead inspector also spoke with 18 parents at the school gate at the start and end of the school day.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school, including an assembly, an act of collective worship, two PE sessions, playtimes and lunchtime.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents, including minutes of governing body meetings, the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, monitoring and assessment information, school policies, behaviour and safety records, safeguarding policies and procedures, and the single central record.

Inspection team

Mark Evans, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Linda Clay	Ofsted Inspector
Heather Mensah	Ofsted Inspector
Ella Besharati	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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