

The South Norwood Academy

34 Crowther Road, South Norwood, London SE25 5QP

Inspection dates

9–10 January 2018

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- The curriculum is inadequate and does not meet pupils' needs. Pupils are not given sufficient or appropriate learning experiences in subjects such as science, history and music.
- Leaders are not demonstrating the capacity required to bring about the necessary improvements.
- Leaders do not have an accurate understanding of the school's performance.
- Teaching is not monitored robustly and teachers do not receive the professional development support to which they are entitled.
- The school development plan lacks focus and does not address the school's inadequacies in teaching or pupil outcomes.
- Some pupils' playtime is spoilt because the supervision of designated play spaces is poorly organised.
- Governors do not ask the right questions to hold leaders to account and have not challenged inadequacies in provision.
- In 2017 pupils' progress in reading was well below average and in the bottom 10% of schools nationally. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards in both English and mathematics was below average.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is inadequate. They are not prepared well enough for their future lives in modern Britain.
- Pupils leave Year 6 without the skills, knowledge and understanding they need for secondary school.
- Provision in the early years is inadequate. It does not build upon previous experiences that children bring from their nursery or home settings.

The school has the following strengths

- Small increases have been seen in key stage 1 outcomes, including in the phonics screening check and in Year 2 assessments.
- In 2017, pupils' progress in writing was above average.
- Pupils are confident and want to learn. They have strong self-esteem and are curious about the world around them.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) 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 quality of teaching and learning to enable all groups of pupils to make good progress across the school by ensuring that:
 - rates of progress are increased across all year groups so that outcomes in English and mathematics are at least in line with national averages
 - a broad, balanced and wide curriculum is in place that allows for the development of knowledge across all year groups
 - teaching deepens pupils' mathematical understanding, particularly through increased opportunities for problem-solving and reasoning
 - pupils gain a deep understanding of inference, deduction, and mastery of vocabulary through reading
 - expectations are raised in the early years' provision to build upon pupils' previous learning from their nursery and home settings
 - clear records are established to track children's development in the early years, including the progression of skills in reading, writing and number.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that:
 - leaders' self-evaluation is accurate and informs school development planning, which in turn is sharp and focused, with all members of staff contributing to school improvement
 - performance management is an accurate assessment of teachers' competencies and informs their professional development
 - governors question leaders on the validity of the information that they receive, in order to hold leaders to account
 - the organisation and supervision of pupils in the playground is improved, so that designated play spaces have appropriate adult oversight to make playtime more enjoyable for pupils.
- An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium is undertaken to identify how this aspect of leadership could be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders are failing to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. The curriculum is not fit for purpose and does not prepare pupils for the next stage of learning. Written plans and policies show significant omissions and lack detail. For example, pupils told inspectors that they are not taught subjects such as science, music, art, design and technology, history, geography and religious education. This is confirmed by the limited amount of work for these subjects in pupils' books.
- This narrow curriculum restricts opportunities for pupils to develop a spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding of the world around them. Assemblies encourage reflection on social and moral themes but these are not deepened through the wider curriculum. Pupils are not adequately prepared for the experiences, responsibilities and opportunities of their future lives in modern Britain.
- The school development plan created by leaders is unwieldy and lacks the focus that is required to address the inadequacies in teaching and pupil outcomes. Teachers have no ownership of this plan and are neither involved in nor aware of the school's improvement strategies. Key objectives are displayed across the school, but teachers are not clear how these will be reached.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's performance is too generous and unrealistic. This has resulted in a lack of urgency. Leaders monitor the quality of teaching through visits to lessons and regular scrutiny of pupils' work. However, this has failed to identify the inadequate quality of education across the school. Consequently, staff have not been provided with adequate or appropriate professional development.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not make sufficient progress. Leaders have not evaluated whether the pupil premium spending has brought about improvement. Inspectors, therefore, recommend a pupil premium review.
- Pupils who have an education, health and care plan placed in the resourced provision make better progress than other groups in the school because teaching is adapted to meet their specific needs.
- Inspectors recognise that, since the school became an academy, leaders have brought about some improvements. These include raising attendance, improving results in the phonic screening checks and small increases in key stage 1 achievement. Nonetheless, as a result of the many weaknesses in leadership and the school's performance, inspectors do not have confidence in leaders' capacity to bring about the necessary improvements.

Governance of the school

- Members of the academy trust have overseen and failed to recognise the school's inadequacies.
- Members of the governing body have the appropriate skills and experience to hold leaders to account but have been too accepting of information presented in the headteacher's reports and have not asked the right questions to challenge leaders.

- Similarly, governors have not challenged or asked questions about curriculum provision and are, therefore, unaware of significant omissions in pupils' education.
- The performance management cycle for teachers lacks rigour. This has been overseen and approved by governors.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Appropriate checks are in place for staff recruitment and employment.
- Staff understand policies and procedures. They know who to approach with an initial concern, and the school's safeguarding team has a clear system to record referrals when there are concerns about pupils' safety. The school and the local authority designated officer for safeguarding have a close working relationship.
- Training on keeping children safe has made staff aware of potential risks, including child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and children missing in education. Workshops for pupils on gangs and knife crime raise their awareness of how to stay safe in the local community.
- Pupils report that they feel safe and are listened to. They know whom to go to when they want to report an issue. In their responses to the online questionnaire parents report that their children feel safe and are well cared for in the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Significant variability in the quality of teaching has a considerable impact on pupils' outcomes. In the majority of classrooms, there is not enough challenge for pupils and teachers' low expectations of what their pupils can achieve limit learning. This contrasts with the small number of classrooms where teaching is effective and where pupils are enthusiastic and motivated.
- Teachers seldom pick up misconceptions in pupils' understanding. This means that pupils are not supported to improve their work. Teachers do not use assessment procedures confidently; planned activities do not take account of the range of learning needs and repeated errors in pupils' work are not corrected.
- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is seriously impeded by low-level tasks and poor questioning skills. Teachers do not demonstrate secure subject knowledge and pupils do not know what to do next in order to move their learning forward. Pupils often disengage from the lesson and valuable learning time is lost.
- There are insufficient learning resources to support pupils' understanding of key concepts. Pupils do not have access to visual or other materials to help them grasp and reinforce their basic mathematical understanding before they move on to learning more abstract concepts.
- The teaching of mathematics mostly relates to number and shape. Reasoning skills have yet to be developed across year groups to enable pupils to reflect, consider and understand mathematical problem-solving. This restricts progress in mathematics.
- Teaching does not prepare pupils for secondary school as pupils have wide gaps in

knowledge, skills and understanding due to the narrow curriculum of reading, writing and mathematics.

- The teaching of phonics in Year 1 is effective, and outcomes have improved to meet national average. This is having a positive effect on the standards of pupils' reading and writing across Year 1 and Year 2.
- The resourced provision is nurturing and learning is well planned to meet pupils' needs. In contrast, intervention programmes in place for pupils who require additional support but do not have an education, health and care plan are not effectively or frequently evaluated and so it is difficult to assess the impact of this 'catch-up' work on their learning.

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 report that they enjoy school and that they feel safe. However, a few pupils reported variability in adults' responses when incidents occur. They told inspectors that occasionally adults do not listen to their concerns about behaviour and bullying.
- Vulnerable pupils are identified, monitored and supported well. Concerns about pupils' mental health and well-being are tracked carefully, and a wide range of therapeutic support is in place to offer care and guidance. Leaders recognise that concerns such as this are potential barriers to learning, and have acted accordingly.
- Most pupils are reflective and demonstrate respect towards the needs of others.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The majority of pupils are polite and courteous, but behaviour and attitudes to learning are affected by inadequate teaching. When pupils are not engaged in learning, they become restless, noise levels rise and some pupils disrupt the learning of others.
- Pupils' behaviour in the playground is boisterous, and boys dominate a large section of the playground for football. The football area is not marked out, and the ball often intrudes onto other pupils' quieter play activities. Incidents such as this provoke conflict, and this is not being managed well by the school.
- The number of entries in the behaviour logs recording incidents of bullying, swearing and physical contact is high.
- Attendance is improving as a result of a wide range of strategies put in place by school leaders. The school contacts pupils' homes on the first day of absence to ensure that pupils are safe and to ask for explanations for absence. Evidence for any medical absence is required and holidays during term time are not authorised.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Most-able pupils do not have sufficient challenge and are not reaching high enough standards. The lowest-attaining pupils are often unable to access learning activities, and the progress of disadvantaged pupils is weak. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in receipt of additional support are not challenged sufficiently to meet age-related expectations.
- In 2017, pupils' progress in reading was well below the national average, and in the bottom 10% of schools nationally. Although reading is a key priority, guided reading across key stage 2 remains weak, and opportunities are missed to extend and deepen pupils' comprehension skills.
- Overall in 2017, pupils' progress in mathematics was average. However, progress made by disadvantaged pupils and those with lower starting points was significantly below average.
- The school teaches a basic skills curriculum of reading, writing and mathematics. Outcomes for other subjects such as science, music, art, design technology, history, geography and religious education are inadequate. Pupils are not given access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 in 2017 was below the national average. Recorded outcomes for the current Year 6 have shown improvement. Work in books for current pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 does not demonstrate rapid enough gains.
- In 2017, pupils' progress in writing was well above the national average overall. Most-able pupils did well, making above-average progress. The progress of other prior attainment groups was average.
- Pupils placed within the resourced provision make stronger progress than other pupils in the school, because teaching is matched successfully to individual learning needs.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- The provision for children in the Reception classes is inadequate. Expectations are low and there is insufficient challenge to support children as they work towards the early learning goals.
- Leaders underestimate the level of children's skills when they enter Reception, and there are limited opportunities to develop early reading, early writing and early number experiences. The tracking of children's development is poor, and the records of this are in disarray.
- There is complacency among leaders who believe that this provision is successful because the proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception is broadly in line with national figures. Progress from children's starting points is weak.
- The teaching of phonics in early years is inadequate and children do not have sufficient opportunity to apply their knowledge of sounds to early writing experiences. Children follow their interests and many choose not to opt in to teacher-planned activities.

- Outdoor provision is weak. Activities do not support the development of fine and gross motor skills in particular.
- Opportunities are lost for children to cooperate and share through active and inquisitive tasks.
- Leaders are keen to visit other provisions to view best practice, as they have not had any external review or support to improve the provision. Arrangements are in place to visit an outstanding provider.

School details

Unique reference number	142404
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10042126

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	442
Appropriate authority	The Synaptic Trust
Chair	Les Jones
Principal	Stephen Schwartz
Telephone number	020 8654 2983
Website	www.thesouthnorwoodacademy.org.uk
Email address	office@thesouthnorwoodacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- South Norwood converted to become an academy in January 2016. It is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The early years provision comprises of two Reception classes.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The school includes resourced provision for 14 pupils who are identified as having moderate learning difficulties.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classrooms. School leaders accompanied some of the visits.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils in lessons and looked at their work.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and observed their behaviour during break and lunchtimes. An inspector met with groups of pupils to hear their views about the school.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, middle leaders and subject leaders to discuss areas of school improvement.
- A meeting was held with the chair and vice-chair of governors, the director of trustees and the chief executive officer of the trust. There was also a meeting with the head of standards for the London Borough of Croydon.
- The school made available a wide range of documents to scrutinise, including the school's self-evaluation, governing body minutes, monitoring records and the school development plan.
- An inspector met with the school business manager to view the single central record, attendance information, risk assessments and first aid/medical books.
- Safeguarding documentation was made available to inspectors and an inspector looked through behaviour logs.
- In addition to speaking with parents in the playground, inspectors took into account the 60 responses from the online questionnaire Parent View.

Inspection team

Tom Canning, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Clementina Aina	Ofsted Inspector
Rekha Bhakoo	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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