

# Silverdale Primary Academy

Perth Road, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN37 7EA

## Inspection dates

20–21 March 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Effective leadership has brought about considerable improvements to many aspects of the school.
- The trust provides good direction and support to the school. The work of the trust has been instrumental in the school's journey of improvement.
- Behaviour is good, and pupils have positive attitudes. The school is an orderly, purposeful environment for learning.
- Teachers are positive about the school's improvements and value leaders' good guidance. They support leaders' drive to improve standards.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. The personal development and good care of pupils is a strength of the school.
- Teaching has improved and is now good. As a result, pupils' progress is continuing to improve.
- Pupils benefit from and enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities.
- Children achieve well in the early years and make a happy, settled and successful start to school. The school's partnership with parents of children in the early years is strong.
- Disadvantaged pupils are supported effectively and, as a result, they are making similar progress to other pupils.
- Although leaders have identified the right priorities for improvement, their plans lack sufficient rigour and clear success criteria.
- The school's local board has not given enough attention to some of its delegated responsibilities, including communication with parents and carers.
- Pupils' writing is not improving quickly enough, and not all teachers have high enough expectations of the quality of pupils' writing.
- The most able pupils are not consistently challenged enough to enable them to attain as well as they can.
- Rates of persistent absence are too high, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

## Full report

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

- Strengthen leadership and governance by ensuring that:
  - the school’s improvement plan is sharpened to include clear, measurable success criteria so that leaders and those responsible for governance can evaluate the progress and impact of their plans
  - trustees implement their plans to fill the vacancies on the school’s local board so that board members can more ably fulfil their delegated responsibilities
  - communication with parents is improved.
- Strengthen teaching in order to improve outcomes further by ensuring that:
  - the most able pupils are more consistently challenged so that they achieve well, and more attain the higher standards and greater depth of learning
  - teachers have higher expectations of the quality and presentation of pupils’ writing, so that pupils make consistently strong progress and a higher proportion attain the expected standards.
- Continue the school’s work to improve attendance and reduce levels of persistent absence, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Since Silverdale joined the academy trust in 2015, effective leadership has enabled the school to improve considerably. Achievement in early years and in phonics has risen substantially. Leaders have also improved the quality of teaching, and standards are rising in key stages 1 and 2.
- Leaders have built a motivated staff team whose members share their vision for improvement. Staff value leaders' direction and support. This is helping to keep the school community focused firmly on improving outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders track pupils' attainment very carefully and can see at a glance how well they are learning within each school year. They are continuing to strengthen their approach by more closely evaluating pupils' progress across key stages.
- Subject leaders contribute well to school improvement. The English and mathematics leaders have introduced a raft of new initiatives to strengthen teaching. These are having a positive impact on pupils' rates of progress, particularly in reading and mathematics. However, leaders' work has not yet had sufficient impact on the quality of pupils' writing.
- Year leaders and subject leaders support their colleagues by providing training and individual support. Equally, they benefit from expertise and support from the trust to develop their own skills and knowledge.
- Leaders make effective use of additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. The school's work to support disadvantaged pupils is a strength and leaders are rightly continuing to 'shine a light' on this group of pupils. Leaders' detailed records enable them to accurately evaluate which interventions are having the greatest impact on pupils' attainment. These records show that the well-considered support pupils are receiving is having a very positive impact on their rates of progress.
- The curriculum is planned appropriately, meets pupils' needs and helps to prepare them well for life in modern Britain. Through religious education, pupils develop their knowledge of other cultures. They understand and respect that not everyone has the same beliefs. Pupils also learn about democracy through the school council elections and the appointments of the head boy and head girl.
- Leaders make good use of the additional funding for sports. Pupils benefit greatly from regular swimming lessons in the school pool, developing their confidence in water and swimming skills. There are many after-school sports clubs, including the very well-attended running club. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about the opportunities they have to take part in competitive events such as cross country. School leaders are also making good use of the sports coaches to develop the skills and knowledge of other staff.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and where they need to make further improvements. They have correctly identified the right priorities for improvement. However, the school's strategic development plan currently lacks sufficient rigour. This plan does not include measurable criteria which would enable

leaders, trustees and board members to evaluate its progress and impact.

## **Governance of the school**

- At the beginning of this school year the trust implemented a new structure of governance and terms of reference for the local board. This has created a clearer structure with transparent lines of accountability between the trust, the board and the school. The trust is suitably informed of all aspects of the school's work, including standards. Leaders' timely meetings with the trust's director of education keep the school under close review.
- The trust acted swiftly to put in place additional support and strengthen leadership capacity at the school in response to unforeseen circumstances, including the absence of other leaders. The appointment of the executive headteacher has been pivotal in making sure that there is no loss of momentum in the school's journey of improvement. The trust acknowledges that some parents and carers have found some of these changes rather unsettling. Some parents remain unclear about the new leadership roles in the school.
- There are currently only three members on the school's local board, as a number of positions on this board remain unfilled. This means that board members are not meeting some of their responsibilities as well as they could. This includes the board's responsibility to respond to the views and needs of key stakeholders, particularly parents and carers. Nevertheless, board members are fulfilling their responsibility to contribute to the monitoring of safeguarding procedures. While there are plans in the pipeline to appoint new board members, these have yet to be finalised.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders are very aware of pupils' vulnerabilities and there is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff are fully aware of their responsibilities and know how to respond if they have a concern. Leaders are tenacious in pursuing any referrals to outside agencies, ensuring that support is put in place quickly to keep pupils safe. Record-keeping is systematic, including those records relating to the pre-employment checks on staff.
- Pupils feel safe and have every confidence that if they have any worries or concerns they can speak to a teacher. The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that their children feel safe. Equally, staff also agree that pupils are safe at Silverdale.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- The quality of teaching is continuing to improve and, overall, is now good. In the few classes where there are some variations in the quality of teaching, leaders are continuing to provide support and mentoring to enable teaching to improve further.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are strong. Routines are strongly established and classrooms are generally happy and purposeful. As a result, pupils are motivated

to learn and enjoy school.

- Teachers make sure that pupils are clear about what they are learning and how to be successful in their tasks. Teachers also make sure that pupils know their next learning steps and how to improve their work.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use this to explain new concepts. They plan learning in interesting contexts. For example, older pupils were inspired to write newspaper reports about the feud between two families in Shakespeare's play, 'Romeo and Juliet'.
- During lessons, teachers check how well pupils are learning and are quick to notice if pupils need extra support or are making errors in their work. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported appropriately. Individual support enables pupils to stay focused and confidently take part in lessons and complete their tasks.
- The school's new approach to mathematics is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers are now providing regular opportunities for pupils to solve problems and develop their reasoning skills. Typically, teachers ask pupils to explain their thinking to deepen their understanding. Teachers use real-life mathematical problems which make learning more meaningful. The newly introduced mathematics 'challenges' are encouraging pupils to extend their learning.
- Phonics is taught well and as a result pupils make good progress in their early reading skills. Teachers motivate pupils to read and develop their skills through well-chosen quality texts. Teachers plan many interesting cross-curricular topics. These include opportunities for pupils to undertake a deeper study of texts and develop both their reading and their writing skills.
- In the majority of classes and subjects, work is pitched at an appropriate level and teachers take appropriate account of pupils' previous learning. However, in some classes, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough, particularly of the most able pupils. In these classes pupils are not moved on as quickly as they could be.
- Teachers provide plentiful opportunities for pupils to write for a wide range of purposes and develop their stamina for writing. However, they do not give sufficient attention to ensuring that pupils present their work neatly or use correct punctuation. Across the school, teachers' expectations of the quality and presentation of pupils' written work are not consistently high enough. As a result, pupils' writing is of variable quality and pupils' progress is not as strong as it could be.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The school's strong focus on helping pupils to 'thrive and flourish' is evident in the day-to-day life of the school. Pupils' well-being is given the highest priority. Adults lead by example by modelling kindness, courtesy and respect.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive, and they talk with pride about their work. Over time, they take increasing responsibility for checking and editing their own work

to make improvements. They are confident and self-assured, and value their unique qualities. As one pupil explained, 'We are all different in our own special way.' Across the school, the vast majority of pupils are respectful and caring of each other.

- The school encourages pupils to take on additional responsibilities. Older pupils enjoy being sports leaders, prefects and library monitors. They particularly enjoy the chance to help and care for younger pupils at the school.
- Discrimination, bullying or any form of unkind behaviour are not tolerated at the school. Pupils are entirely confident that any issues will be dealt with and quickly resolved by staff. Pupils appreciate the way that staff are always there to talk with them and allow them space and time to express their feelings. As one pupil explained, 'You never need to be worried.'
- Pupils are knowledgeable about keeping safe, including when online. They also know that they must always behave responsibly when using the computer. Special days, such as the 'safer internet day', highlight to pupils the importance of personal safety and how to reduce and manage risk.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In class and around the school the vast majority of pupils behave well. At breaktimes, they play happily together and enjoy the attractive and appealing outdoor spaces.
- Leaders' good work has had a marked impact on improving standards of behaviour at the school. The school's records show that incidents of poor behaviour and exclusions have reduced considerably. Leaders are wisely continuing to reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions.
- Overall attendance is similar to the national average and is improving, albeit slowly. In recent years, levels of persistent absence have been too high, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Despite leaders' hard work and tenacity, levels of persistent absence have remained stubbornly high. The school has recently appointed an attendance officer to support their drive to improve attendance. Leaders recognise that this aspect of the school's work will need to remain 'under the spotlight'.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Outcomes for pupils are now good. Improvements in the quality of teaching are leading to improvements in pupils' progress. As a result, standards are rising and an increasing proportion of pupils are meeting age-related expectations at the end of key stages 1 and 2.
- In 2017, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 was close to the national average, as was reading at the end of key stage 2. However, standards in writing and mathematics were below average, and pupils' progress in these subjects was not strong.
- The school's assessment information and evidence from pupils' work in books confirm that current pupils are making good progress in reading and mathematics. Pupils steadily develop their phonics skills, applying these when tackling new words.

Pupils read for meaning, and the most able pupils read fluently, making good use of the wide selection of books from the school's library. Pupils are also suitably developing their calculation and mathematical-reasoning skills.

- However, evidence from pupils' work in their books paints a more varied picture of writing standards. While pupils' stamina for writing is improving and they are writing at increasing length, some aspects of their writing remain weak. Basic punctuation errors and poor presentation too often impair the quality of many pupils' writing.
- In 2017, by the end of key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils achieved similar standards to their peers. Although a lower proportion of disadvantaged pupils are currently working at the expected standards, they are making overall good progress. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are also making steady gains in their learning.
- Although there are now more pupils than in previous years working at the higher standards, the most able pupils are not consistently challenged in class. Consequently, these pupils do not attain as well as they could, and currently too few are working at greater depth of learning.
- The school's good provision for pupils' personal development helps them to become confident learners, ready to embrace the challenges of moving on to their respective secondary schools.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Children in the early years get off to a good start at Silverdale. Good teaching, warm relationships and interesting activities combine to create an enabling environment for learning. As a result, children make good progress and positively thrive.
- By the end of their year in Reception, children attain standards that are above the national average. Disadvantaged children make the same progress as others with similar starting points. Children's confident start and good achievement mean that they are well prepared for Year 1.
- Teachers plan stimulating activities that successfully harness children's natural enthusiasm and curiosity. Inviting tasks sustain children's interest. Their early reading, writing and number skills are developed well. Teachers plan many imaginative activities where children can learn and practise their skills. For example, during the inspection some children were absorbed in writing lists of stolen items from 'Burglar Bill's' sack.
- Children's behaviour and attitudes to learning are consistently good. They are excited to learn, and confident to try new things and contribute in class. During the week of the inspection, children could not wait to put their hands in the tray of 'alphabet spaghetti' and explore the different letters. They cheerfully cooperate and play together happily.
- Teachers keep a very close check on how well children are learning. Their well-judged observations and assessments enable them to carefully plan for children's next learning steps. They also draw upon the valuable information that parents share about their children's learning and achievements out of school.
- Standards in early years have risen considerably and are testament to leaders' good

work. Leaders have recently made improvements to the outdoor learning spaces, which are now attractive, well resourced and support learning.

- Arrangements for children's welfare needs, including safeguarding, are effective. Good transition arrangements, including home visits, mean that children make a confident start to school. Parents appreciate the good communication with the early years team and express high levels of satisfaction. As one parent commented, 'I am completely satisfied, I have nothing but praise for the school.'

## School details

Unique reference number	141713
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10040892

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	627
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Professor Christopher Pole
Acting Principal	Jonathan Morris
Executive principal	John Smith
Telephone number	01424 448 100
Website	<a href="http://www.silverdaleprimaryacademy.org.uk/">www.silverdaleprimaryacademy.org.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@silverdaleprimaryacademy.org.uk">office@silverdaleprimaryacademy.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- This was the first inspection of the school since it converted to academy status in February 2015 and joined the University of Brighton Academies Trust. The school is one of 15 schools in this trust.
- The school is led by its own principal and has a local board which operates as a committee of the multi-academy trust's board of trustees. The local board has some areas of responsibility which are delegated to it by the board of trustees. An executive principal from the trust was appointed in the autumn term to increase leadership capacity during the absence of the principal.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of key stage 2.
- There is a breakfast club and after-school club, both of which are run by the school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes, sometimes accompanied by a member of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also made short visits to classes. During visits to classrooms, inspectors talked with pupils about their learning and evaluated the quality of pupils' work in books. Inspectors also listened to pupils read and met with a representative group of pupils from Years 2 to 6.
- In addition to reviewing pupils' work in classrooms, three separate meetings were held with leaders to review the quality of pupils' work in English, mathematics and the wider curriculum.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, during breaktimes and lunchtimes and as they moved around the school.
- Meetings were held with the acting principal, the executive principal, senior leaders, year leaders, subject leaders, support staff and other teachers. The lead inspector met with two members of the board of trustees, one governor, and the director of school improvement from the trust.
- Inspectors met with parents at the end of the first day of the inspection and again at the start of the second day of the inspection. Inspectors took into account the 65 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the accompanying free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to the school's parental survey from 20 March 2018.
- The views of staff were gathered through discussions with them and through the 48 responses to Ofsted's confidential staff survey.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents and policies, including those regarding the safety of pupils, attendance and behaviour. Inspectors reviewed other school documents, including the school's improvement plan, policies, evaluations of teaching and learning, and minutes of meetings held by the trust and the local board. Other documents, including the director of education's regular reports to trustees, were also considered.

## Inspection team

Sue Cox, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Joyce Lydford	Ofsted Inspector
Lynda Welham	Ofsted Inspector
Tracey Bowen	Ofsted Inspector

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