

Sunny Bank Primary School

Sunny Bank, Murston, Sittingbourne ME10 3QN

Inspection dates

18–19 June 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Over the past three years, weak and turbulent leadership has prevented the school from improving. Despite recent changes, the school lacks the depth and capacity in leadership required to improve.
- The quality of teaching is too variable. Teachers do not use assessment information to plan work at the right level for pupils. Sometimes, teachers' expectations are too low.
- The curriculum is poorly planned. Pupils miss out on key learning in subjects such as art, computing and music. When subjects are taught, the coverage can be haphazard, leaving gaps in pupils' understanding.
- Pupils who fall behind in reading are not identified or supported as well as they should be. This is particularly the case for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Middle leaders are new to their roles and lack the capacity to monitor and develop the quality of teaching or the curriculum.
- Governors are new to their posts and do not possess sufficient skill or training to rigorously challenge the underperformance that has been evident for some years.
- Despite the best efforts of leaders, pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should.
- Pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. As a result, too few pupils leave the school with the knowledge and skills required for their secondary education.
- The interim executive headteacher has provided vital support for the school. However, the school is currently reliant on this external support to secure improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- The early years is good. Strong leadership has revitalised the quality of teaching and support for children. High proportions of children reach a good level of development.
- The new head of school has made a great start and is winning the confidence of staff, parents and carers, and pupils.
- The personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils are good. Staff have worked hard to ensure that pupils are supported to meet the school's expectations for behaviour. Classes are calm, orderly environments where pupils can concentrate and work without disruption.

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 capacity of leadership and management, by ensuring that:
 - permanent and stable senior leadership is secured, with the appropriate skills and experience to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes
 - middle leaders are appropriately trained to develop and evaluate the quality of teaching in their subject
 - governors are appropriately trained in their role so that they can maintain strategic oversight of the school and challenge leaders effectively
 - the curriculum is planned and delivered to meet the needs of pupils, and covers, as a minimum, all national curriculum subjects.
- Improve teaching and learning, by:
 - ensuring that teachers have the appropriate skills and understanding to assess pupils accurately in all curriculum subjects, and use this information to plan lessons that build on pupils' prior knowledge
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in all subjects.
- Improve outcomes for pupils, by:
 - strengthening progress in the foundation subjects
 - ensuring that pupils who fall behind in reading are given the right support to catch up with their peers
 - improving progress in the core subjects so that greater proportions of pupils, particularly those who are from disadvantaged backgrounds, attain at the expected or higher standard for their age.
- Continue to increase rates of attendance, particularly for pupils who are from disadvantaged backgrounds.

External reviews of governance and the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Since the school opened in 2016, changes in leadership have created instability for staff and pupils. The newly appointed head of school has started with determination and ambition, working closely with the interim executive headteacher from a local academy trust which has provided strong external support. However, weaknesses in leadership mean that leaders are over reliant on this interim, external support in order to improve the school.
- Systems for checking the quality of teaching are in place but are applied ineffectively. There have been some improvements. For example, teachers are now clearer about how pupils should present their work in lessons. However, over time, leaders have not given teachers sharply focused feedback or the support they need to improve. As a result, the quality of teaching has remained inconsistent and is improving too slowly.
- Staff and leaders track the performance of pupils, but weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge mean that the assessment information is often inaccurate. When pupils fall behind, leaders' actions are inconsistent, meaning that staff are not routinely supported or challenged to strengthen pupils' progress.
- Middle leaders are inexperienced or new to their roles. They do not possess sufficient experience or skill to properly hold teachers to account for the progress of pupils, particularly those who are from disadvantaged backgrounds. There is limited capacity for improving pupils' outcomes across the school.
- Poor curriculum planning means that pupils do not receive their full curriculum entitlement, particularly in the foundation subjects. This means that there are gaps in their understanding and knowledge in key subjects such as music, art and computing.
- The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is improving. Increasingly, pupils' needs are identified and addressed by staff. As a result, these pupils are able to work and learn alongside their peers in school.
- Leaders' actions to improve behaviour in the school have been effective. Leaders possess a strong understanding of behaviour management and have ensured that staff identify and consider pupils' needs and are able to manage their behaviour. As a result, the behaviour of pupils in the school has improved.
- The support from the local authority has not helped to provide enough stability to the school. Despite officers' efforts over time, substantive leadership has not been secured, which means that improvements are too slow and remain fragile.
- The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- Most governors are new to their role and have strong ambitions for the school and its pupils. They visit the school regularly to gain an understanding of its effectiveness. However, governors do not focus their efforts strategically and are unable to hold

leaders to account for the quality of education provided by the school.

- Governors maintain a close eye on the use of additional funding such as the pupil premium. Nevertheless, the monies spent have been largely focused on improving behaviour and, as a result, the progress of disadvantaged pupils remains weak and has been since Sunny Bank Primary opened in 2016.
- The governing body has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are effective. Governors' visits to the school have identified the right priorities, meaning that improvements to procedures and the school grounds have been secured.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff receive appropriate training and their own suitability to work with children is checked well before they commence employment. Staff are well versed in identifying and reporting concerns and provide leaders with vital information which they use to identify families that need help. When required, leaders act swiftly, working with appropriate external agencies to provide the right support for families.
- Pupils learn to keep themselves safe and speak confidently about how to identify and manage risk. For example, pupils learn how to cross roads safely. Pupils are taught to identify online risks and know how to report concerns should they arise.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school. Teachers do not effectively plan or develop series of lessons that build on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding. As a result, pupils do not retain what they have learned and progress is inconsistent.
- Teachers do not routinely use assessment information to identify what pupils know and understand. Some members of staff have low expectations or do not understand how much children can achieve. As a result, work is often set at the wrong level for pupils, particularly the most able.
- Teachers do not ensure that pupils experience the full range of the national curriculum. Often, teachers lack confidence in delivering the full curriculum and do not know what pupils learn in the years before and after. The curriculum is not planned effectively enough to ensure that pupils learn the full range of subjects during their primary school years.
- In mathematics, some pupils develop the core skills to understand numbers and complete calculations. However, too often, pupils do not complete sufficiently challenging work, or they flit between topics in mathematics. This hinders their progress.
- Pupils, particularly those who are from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who fall behind, are not supported to read well in key stage 1. Too often, these pupils are not given opportunities to read, meaning that they do not get the essential practice they need to catch up with their peers.

- Teachers ask valuable questions that support pupils' understanding and require them to think carefully about the task. Pupils respond enthusiastically, and this allows them the opportunity to extend and consider their learning.
- Staff and pupils enjoy positive relationships in class. As a result, classes are typically happy places where pupils feel safe.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils relish their responsibilities. They help adults during play at lunchtime and speak excitedly about their work on the school council. The sense of community and commitment to each other permeates the school.
- Pupils are respectful of, and interested in, the religious beliefs of others. For example, pupils in Year 5 learnt about the Islamic faith, researching the five pillars of Islam and considering the beliefs of Muslims. Pupils are well prepared to be responsible citizens in a pluralistic society.
- Pupils are aware of the school's values of honesty, effort, attitude, respect and tolerance and have a growing understanding of their relevance. The values have been used to develop themed days that help to embed the values through art, drama and music. Although this is a recent improvement, pupils do look forward to these days and appreciate the broad experiences they gain from such events.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved. Strong relationships between staff and pupils, coupled with effective support from leaders, have ensured that pupils typically enter the school with enthusiastic attitudes and ready to learn.
- Pupils behave well during playtimes. They enjoy one another's company and enjoy the opportunity to play with their friends. They feel that behaviour is positive in school and rarely fall out with each other. When they do, pupils are confident that they can speak to a trusted adult who will support them.
- Pupils with SEND are well supported to integrate into mainstream classes. The support to ensure that pupils can manage their feelings and emotions means that these pupils now participate well with their peers.
- Pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should. Levels of absence, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, are above the national average. Leaders are well aware of this and are taking appropriate action to challenge and support families so these pupils attend more regularly.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils' outcomes are too low. In recent years, the proportion of pupils who attained the expected or higher standard in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 was well below the national average. This leaves pupils, including the most able, ill prepared for the next stages of their education.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is weak. Support and additional funding for these pupils have not enabled them to make the progress of which they are capable. Consequently, these pupils' progress is significantly lower than that of other pupils nationally.
- Pupils' writing is improving. Increasingly, pupils use their grammar and punctuation skills to write interesting texts in a range of genres. Nevertheless, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching mean that not all pupils are making strong progress in writing.
- Pupils make inconsistent progress across the foundation curriculum. In some classes, pupils do not receive their full curriculum entitlement. As a result, pupils have gaps in their understanding in subjects such as geography, history and science.
- Pupils who fall behind in key stage 1 struggle to read because they do not receive adequate opportunities to practise their reading at home or school. Often, texts are too hard for pupils, meaning that they are unable to decode the words on the page.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is inconsistent. In the best classes, pupils possess a strong understanding of calculation and use this to solve increasingly complex problems. However, in weaker classes, pupils do not build on their prior learning and often forget the skills they have developed. This weakens their progress.
- Pupils with SEND are increasingly well supported to access their learning. As a result, these pupils' progress, particularly the progress of those with behavioural difficulties, is strengthening.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter early years with skills and understanding below those typically seen nationally. By the time they leave Reception, high proportions of children reach a good level of development. This represents strong progress from their starting points.
- Children in early years form strong relationships with adults and feel safe. As a result, children quickly settle into school life and form positive relationships which set them up well for the challenges of Year 1 when they come.
- Children are inquisitive and enjoy learning about the world around them. For example, children used tablet computers to look up bugs that they found outside and discussed their findings and observations. Teachers and support staff utilise their enthusiasm and question children well, encouraging further enquiry. As a result, children develop a positive attitude to learning.
- Adults question children well. They use the answers given by children to help develop language and vocabulary. For example, a teacher supported a child as he jumped in a tyre, eliciting the description of his bouncing and helping him to form words correctly and build his vocabulary.
- Phonics is taught well in early years. Adults have strong subject knowledge and ensure that lessons are purposeful. As a result, children build phonic knowledge over time and

apply this to their writing.

- The leadership of early years is effective. The early years leader has a sound understanding of expectations in early years and supports the team in the Reception class well. However, while supportive, she has not developed as clear an understanding of the Nursery provision and has rightly targeted this as a key area to develop in the school's plan for improvement.

School details

Unique reference number	142486
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10088085

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	298
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Batters
Executive Headteacher	Yvonne Nunn
Telephone number	01795 473891
Website	http://sunnybankprimary.com
Email address	office@sunnybank.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Sunny Bank Primary School was formed from the amalgamation of an infant and junior school. The school opened in 2016 and is currently based on two separate sites.
- The current head of school started in post in April 2019. An interim executive headteacher from the Hampton Primary Trust provides support for the school. This external support is reviewed and contracted on an annual basis.
- The chair of governors took up her role in December 2018. The vice-chair of governors took up her role in February 2019.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 23 parts of lessons, some with senior leaders.
- In addition to discussions with parents, 93 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered.
- A range of the school's documentation was scrutinised to gather information on: leaders' evaluation of the school's performance; systems for managing the performance of teachers; behaviour and safety of pupils; safeguarding; the progress and attainment of pupils; and curriculum leadership.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website to evaluate the quality of information for parents and whether the school meets statutory publishing requirements.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils to gather their views and heard pupils read.
- Inspectors met with school leaders, representatives from the governing body (including the chair), and officers from the local authority.

Inspection team

Daniel Lambert, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Graham Chisnell	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Hogarth	Ofsted Inspector

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