

Sowerby Village CofE VC Primary School

St Peter's Avenue, Sowerby, Sowerby Bridge, West Yorkshire HX6 1HB

Inspection dates

5–6 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and governors do not have the capacity to address weaknesses in important areas of the school's work.
- The development of middle leadership has been hampered by the high level of staff turnover. This is further reducing the school's capacity to secure the necessary improvements.
- Leaders' plans for improvement lack focus on the things that need to improve most urgently. Actions taken have not stemmed the decline in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Leaders are not taking appropriate steps to secure good behaviour from pupils.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve are too low and they do not address the gaps in pupils' knowledge. Lower-attaining pupils, in particular, do not have enough chance to practise and secure their basic skills.
- The curriculum design does not offer pupils enough opportunity to build on their prior learning and deepen their understanding in English and mathematics.
- The teaching of phonics is ineffective. Too many pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not receive the support they need to read with fluency.
- Current pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not making enough progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Some pupils' behaviour is unacceptable. It disrupts the learning of others and does not support an orderly environment. Pupils say that the use of discriminatory language is frequent and is not challenged by adults.
- Safeguarding is not effective. There is a lack of rigour in following up some concerns about pupils' safety.

The school has the following strengths

- Current staff in the early years have made some recent improvements to provision. The quality of teaching is improving and is better meeting children's needs.
- Leaders provide pupils with a range of experiences and opportunities to support their personal development.
- Attendance has improved over time and was just above the national average in 2017/18.

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?

- Urgently improve the quality of leadership, including governance, by ensuring that:
 - plans for improvement are focused on the most pressing priorities and have precise measures of success
 - the quality of teaching is checked thoroughly so that areas requiring support and training are identified swiftly, leading to more rapid improvement
 - the impact of leaders' actions, for example to support disadvantaged pupils' achievement, is evaluated sharply so that strategies become increasingly effective
 - pupils' reading is an ongoing priority for development and that teachers have the necessary subject knowledge to teach reading effectively
 - middle leaders are supported to become effective in their responsibilities
 - there is a comprehensive induction programme for new staff
 - swift action is taken to meet the needs of all pupils with SEND
 - there are rapid improvements in pupils' behaviour and a reduction in fixed-term exclusions and the use of discriminatory language
 - the curriculum, in English and mathematics in particular, is sufficiently challenging and is sequenced so that pupils build and develop their understanding over time
 - all concerns about pupils' safety and welfare are acted upon with rigour and are recorded effectively so that pupils are protected from potential harm
 - safeguarding training is effective in alerting staff to possible signs of concern
 - governors understand their responsibilities and hold leaders stringently to account.
- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make consistently good progress across a wide range of subjects, especially reading, by ensuring that:
 - curriculum plans provide teachers with clarity about the intended learning in each subject
 - teachers demonstrate high expectations of what pupils achieve by designing learning activities which help pupils consolidate their knowledge or deepen their understanding
 - there is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics, including plentiful reading practice, so that all pupils learn to read with fluency as soon as possible
 - additional support for pupils falling behind in the phonic programme helps these

pupils to catch up quickly

- in the early stages of reading, pupils' books match the sounds they know and the words to which they have been exposed
- pupils have regular opportunities to read across the curriculum
- pupils develop accurate letter formation so their handwriting can develop well
- support for pupils with SEND is tailored effectively to meet their needs
- ongoing assessment is used effectively to identify what pupils know, understand and can do, so that gaps in their learning can be addressed swiftly.

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

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium 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

- Leaders and governors have an inaccurate and overly positive view of the school's effectiveness. They have not successfully managed the ongoing turbulence in staffing. The quality of teaching and pupils' progress has deteriorated as a result.
- Leaders' plans for improvement do not address the weaknesses which exist, for example, in the teaching of early reading. Additionally, they do not contain precise intentions about the impact of actions on pupils' outcomes. Too often, leaders and governors measure success in terms of the completion of actions rather than the difference made to the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- There has been turmoil in the school's leadership. While the headteacher has remained in post since the last inspection, the quality of middle leadership has been, and continues to be, erratic. Subject and phase leaders are very new to post and some are due to leave. They have begun to use their checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to identify areas for improvement, but have lacked effective direction.
- Leaders have not identified important weaknesses in the teaching of early reading. The curriculum for phonics is unclear. Staff do not receive the training needed to teach phonics and early reading effectively.
- Most teachers feel that their induction and ongoing support to develop their teaching is not effective. This weak support leaves staff unclear about the curriculum, teaching or how best to manage pupils' behaviour.
- Leaders have not responded promptly enough to the downturn in pupils' behaviour. Incidents are now recorded more effectively but leaders fail to identify the underlying causes. For example, leaders have not recognised the link between pupils' behaviour and their engagement in lessons or the quality of teaching.
- Leadership for provision for pupils with SEND has been inconsistent, and the quality of support for these pupils has been weak. The headteacher has recently taken over this role and has begun to identify where provision needs to improve. However, actions have been slow to occur and provision for these pupils is not consistently effective.
- Leaders and governors do not have a clear picture of the impact of pupil premium spending on the academic outcomes achieved by disadvantaged pupils. Similarly, the impact of funding for physical education (PE) and sport is not evaluated effectively. However, pupils access a range of sporting opportunities and participate in local competitions and events.
- Leaders have not made sure that the content and sequencing of pupils' learning in English and mathematics is effective enough. However, the wider curriculum offers a broad range of opportunities for pupils to learn about the world around them. The curriculum is enriched and extended through extra-curricular activities, visitors and visits.
- Leaders promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils through activities such as assemblies and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons. This is effective in preparing pupils for life in modern Britain.
- The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- Despite governors' loyal support of the school, they have not challenged leaders thoroughly to make sure that the school is providing an effective education for pupils. Governors have been too ready to accept leaders' assertions about pupils' outcomes. This is, in part, because information provided by leaders does not provide enough detail, for example about the achievement of different groups of pupils and how this compares with pupils nationally or for these pupils over time.
- Governors have not ensured that the school's website meets statutory requirements. For example, evaluations on the impact of the pupil premium and PE sports premium were not available at the time of the inspection. Governors are unclear about the effect that additional expenditure has on disadvantaged pupils' attainment and progress.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Records show that concerns about pupils' safety and welfare are not acted upon with enough rigour. For example, there are occasions where leaders take no further action when a satisfactory explanation about a pupil's injuries has not been established. On other occasions, the actions that leaders have taken are not recorded. This leaves vulnerable pupils potentially at risk from harm.
- Staff receive regular training about keeping pupils safe. However, leaders have not checked the impact of this training. Too many staff have not understood key messages from the training they have received.
- Checks on the suitability of staff to work in the school are comprehensive and records of these checks are up to date.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Staffing instability has had a negative impact on the quality of teaching. Overall, teaching is highly variable and often fails to meet pupils' needs.
- When planning learning activities for their class, teachers are unclear about what they intend pupils to know, understand and be able to do. This is because leaders have not implemented appropriate curriculum plans. For example, writing tasks are often linked to pupils' learning in other subjects but fail to link with the national curriculum for writing.
- Teachers' lack of clarity about what pupils need to learn is reflected in their low expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly for lower-attaining pupils. Time is often wasted on activities to keep pupils busy but do not help them consolidate their learning. Lower-attaining pupils, in particular, do not have enough opportunity to practise their writing. An over-reliance on the use of tasks which require pupils to fill in missing words or write in boxes prevents them from writing with quality and accuracy. Pupils' letter formation and handwriting is a weakness throughout the school.
- Leaders have not implemented an appropriate curriculum for the teaching of phonics. This leaves teachers with no clear structure to follow and a lack of adherence to one approach. There are limited opportunities for pupils to practise reading, spelling and

letter formation in their phonics sessions. Pupils with the most catching up to do have even less practise with reading than their peers. Instead, they are kept occupied with tasks which are not related to the development of their phonic knowledge.

- The sequencing of pupils' learning in English is not considered well enough. Isolated activities are not helping pupils to build effectively on their prior learning. Teachers are not checking that pupils have secured their knowledge of the curriculum in earlier year groups. For example, issues with letter formation and lack of finger spaces persist long after pupils should have acquired this understanding.
- In mathematics, teachers are not using ongoing assessment well enough to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. New learning does not effectively build on what has been taught before. This results in pupils using inefficient methods, as they have not secured the basic understanding of number to help them complete more complex calculations. For too many pupils, gaps in their knowledge mean that they are not able to access the learning. This leads to off-task and, sometimes, disruptive behaviour.
- Assessment is not used effectively to capture what pupils know and can do. Some of the school's own assessment information is inaccurate because the assessments made do not match the curriculum which has been delivered.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. Pupils' safety and welfare are not promoted effectively enough. Safeguarding records show that leaders do not always take the action needed to help and protect pupils when concerns are identified.
- Too many of the pupils who spoke to inspectors said they do not like coming to school because others bully them or are unkind. Pupils say that the use of homophobic language is common and is rarely challenged by adults.
- In lessons, pupils are usually keen to engage in learning. However, they lose interest when they do not understand what is expected of them or have completed a task and do not know what to do next. Pupils do not consistently show pride and care in their work.
- Older pupils demonstrate a reasonable understanding of the importance of keeping safe and healthy. For example, they can explain how to stay safe online and know the dangers of substance misuse.
- The parent liaison officer works with families of vulnerable pupils. The pastoral support, which identified pupils receive, has benefited their emotional well-being. Parents and carers recognise and value this support.
- The wide range of extra-curricular opportunities and access to free before and after-school clubs supports pupils' personal development.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.

- Most pupils conduct themselves sensibly as they move around school. However, a significant minority of pupils show a lack of self-discipline. They disrupt the learning of others, act in a disorderly manner and ignore requests from staff when they are asked to act appropriately.
- The rate of fixed-term exclusion has been continually above the national average for several years and is not showing any significant or sustained improvement.
- Pupils attendance has been increasing over time. By 2017/18, attendance was just above the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- A decline in the quality of teaching has led to pupils making inadequate progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Weak assessment practice and a poorly structured curriculum contribute to pupils' poor progress. Lower-attaining pupils, many of whom are also disadvantaged, are not supported well enough to secure their basic skills.
- By the end of key stage 2 in 2018, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics was in the lowest 20% nationally, having been broadly average in previous years. The attainment of these pupils was also below the national average.
- Results in the Year 1 phonics screening check have been declining over time and have been below the national average since 2016. The phonics curriculum is not designed to give pupils enough practice and so they are slow in developing their phonic knowledge. Pupils who need to catch up are not receiving enough additional support and practice to help them read with growing fluency. Consequently, too many pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, enter key stage 2 without being able to read at an age-appropriate level of accuracy and understanding. These pupils do not catch up with their peers in key stage 2.
- Pupils enjoy the class novels they read but would like to have more opportunities to read independently, for example, to support their learning across the wider curriculum. Pupils feel that the books available to read in school and at home do not interest them.
- Pupils with SEND do not make strong progress from their starting points. This is because teaching does not fully meet their needs and the quality of the support they receive is not consistently effective.
- Pupils' outcomes across the wider curriculum are variable. Pupils' workbooks show that they are not deepening their knowledge, skills and understanding effectively over time.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- The effectiveness of early years provision is inadequate because whole-school systems for keeping pupils safe are ineffective.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development has been similar to that seen nationally in the last three years. However, children's progress from their starting points on entry to Nursery has not been consistently strong.
- Since January, staffing has settled. The two teachers, including one who is the new early years leader, have a clear vision for the early years unit. Since their time in the

early years, they have accurately identified areas for improvement. There has been a focus on developing children's language and encouraging more mark-making in all the areas of provision, including in the outdoor area. Staff are working together to plan provision which is better meeting children's needs. However, both leaders are leaving at the end of this year and the green shoots of improvement seen are, therefore, fragile.

- Staff have a clear understanding of what each child knows and can do. This is used to create helpful next-step learning targets for each child. Staff have high expectations of children's learning, often asking probing questions to deepen their thinking. This encourages children to draw upon what they already know and develops connections with new learning.
- Despite the lack of a whole-school approach to the teaching of phonics, the new early years leader has begun developing the teaching of early reading to help children to use and apply their phonic knowledge more successfully. However, not enough attention is paid to accurate letter formation.
- Teachers carefully select books which match children's phonic knowledge as closely as possible. However, some of the books used to teach reading in school, and at home, contain words that children cannot decode and include common exception words to which children have not been exposed.
- Storytime happens frequently and learning activities are often based around a familiar book which staff are reading to the children. Children particularly enjoy taking part and acting out the story. This also helps their understanding of new language. For example, having read 'Goldilocks and the three bears', children practised ordering some objects by size and could use comparative language to describe them.
- Leaders have introduced a range of opportunities to engage with parents and involve them in their child's learning and development. For example, 'Terrific Tuesdays' allow parents to come into class to find out about the school's approach to teaching phonics, reading and handwriting.
- In January 2016, leaders introduced provision for two-year-olds. They are well supported by staff who make use of a range of sensory resources to support their development.
- Staff have very positive relationships with children. Interactions with children, such as during snack time, are used well as a time for reflection and discussion. Consequently, children feel valued and respond to the adults well, behaving calmly and sensibly. Staff also encourage children to keep themselves healthy, for example with the daily teeth-brushing routine.
- When children are working independently in the classroom and outdoor area, they show age-appropriate levels of concentration and focus.
- Staff have supported children in the Nursery class to develop learning behaviours that will help them to make good progress. Children listen well, respond to adults' questions, collaborate with their peers and take turns.
- Staff have received safeguarding training. However, not all staff are aware of key aspects of the training. This means they are not well prepared to spot potential signs of concern.

School details

Unique reference number	133671
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10089011

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Sutton
Headteacher	Lynsey Mitchell
Telephone number	01422 831971
Website	www.sowerbyvillage.org.uk
Email address	admin@sowerbyvillage.calderdale.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 May 2015

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, there has been significant staffing turbulence. All teachers and leaders, except the headteacher, are new to post since that time. Staffing remains unstable with two leaders, one of whom is newly appointed, leaving at the end of the school year.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It is a voluntary controlled Church of England school in the Diocese of Leeds. Since the last inspection, the school has introduced Nursery provision for two-year-olds.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils with SEND is in line with the national average.
- The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs.
- The school accesses support and development through a local cluster of schools, arranged by the local authority.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning throughout the school. Several of the observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors listened to some pupils read and talked to a sample of pupils about their experience of school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, the early years leader and a range of subject leaders. A meeting was held with two members of the governing body and a phone call took place with the chair. Meetings also took place with representatives of the local authority and the diocese.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in books, along with the school's information on pupils' achievement, to determine the progress that they are making.
- A range of documentation was considered. This included the school's self-evaluation, records of the monitoring of teaching and learning, plans for improvement, information relating to the attendance and behaviour of pupils, safeguarding and child protection records, and minutes from governing body meetings. Documents outlining the arrangements for the use of pupil premium funding were also considered.
- An inspector spoke to parents informally at the start of the school day to seek their views about the school. Inspectors also spoke to a range of staff about the support and development they receive. The 39 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were also taken into consideration.
- There were no responses to the staff or pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Kirsty Godfrey, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tim Scargill

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019