

Inspection of Ferham Primary School

Ferham Road, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S61 1AP

Inspection dates: 11–12 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Ferham Primary School is not an effective school. Pupils do not learn well, and some pupils say that behaviour at lunchtimes is poor. Pupils are behind in their reading and in their mathematics and are not catching up.

Lots of pupils come and go during the year. Leaders say that this is one of the reasons that pupils' results are so low. Teachers do not have high enough expectations for what pupils can achieve and think that pupils cannot manage the work that is intended to be taught for their age. These low expectations are holding pupils back.

Governors do not check whether leaders are tackling bullying effectively. Leaders do not keep sufficiently detailed records of all the incidents of bullying that occur. Pupils are not always kind to one another, and a small number of pupils reported incidents of name calling to inspectors. Pupils say that leaders do stop bullying, but that it can sometimes take too long.

Pupils know the school values of courage, equality, friendship, respect, determination, excellence and inspiration. There are value jars around school to remind pupils of them.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have been unsuccessful in their attempts to improve the quality of education at Ferham Primary School. They do not know what else to do. Leaders are not providing pupils with an adequate quality of education. Pupils' results have been low since 2016 and are getting worse. Senior local authority officers evaluate this school as 'causing concern'. Inspectors agree. The progress that leaders have made is not good enough. Pupils deserve better. Governors have not held leaders to account to ensure that the school's overall performance improves. Prior to this inspection, governors took the decision to join a multi-academy trust to gain support in improving this school.

The proportion of pupils who can read effectively is unacceptably low. Teachers in key stage 1 do not expect enough of pupils. In guided reading, they spend too long recapping letters and sounds that pupils already know. Pupils get bored and ask, 'Can we read yet?' Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to practise reading to an adult. Leaders do not make sure that all reading books are matched well to pupils' phonics knowledge. This means that when pupils are given the chance to read, they cannot read their books fluently. This knocks their confidence.

Leaders say that the high proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school in-year affects their results. Leaders monitor the results of pupils who have been with them every year from Reception to Year 6 separately. This shows little difference. In 2019, about a quarter of Year 6 pupils learned to read as well as they should for their age.

The figure for those Year 6 pupils who had been at Ferham since Reception was 28%. Most pupils will struggle at secondary school because they cannot read well enough. Leaders have been in post for several years. They know that pupils are not learning to read as well as they should. Senior and middle leaders do not have the skills they need to ensure that this improves quickly.

Pupils are not doing well in mathematics either. Teachers' expectations of pupils are far too low. The mathematics curriculum is not ambitious. Teachers give pupils work that is far too easy for them. Teachers often plan from the curriculum that is intended for younger pupils. Teachers do not give pupils the work that they should be doing for their age. Leaders realise this, but they are not taking effective action to change it.

Leaders keep trying new things. They have introduced complicated ways to assess pupils. Teachers are spending a lot of time recording information that leaders have requested. This has increased teachers' workload, and it is not making any difference, so this is wasted time.

Children do not get off to a good start in the early years. There is a high proportion of children who speak English as an additional language. Leaders know that learning phonics in English can be more difficult for these pupils at first. However, leaders have not ensured that children's communication, language and literacy skills have a high priority. There are insufficient opportunities for children to practise their early reading and writing skills. Adults do not fully understand how young children learn. While some adults ask the right questions when children are playing, others do not. This means that, for some children, valuable learning opportunities are lost.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) goes out of her way to help pupils and parents who speak English as an additional language. Leaders help parents to read letters about their children's medical appointments. They remind parents to keep these appointments. Leaders write personal plans for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, some pupils are kept on reduced timetables for far too long. Pupils are missing out on their education when they are at home instead of school. Pupils' attendance overall remains low and is not improving sufficiently. This means that a number of pupils have gaps in their learning.

Leaders have not successfully engaged all parents, so they do not know parents' views. Only nine parents responded to Ofsted's survey. One parent wrote, 'I do not believe my children's educational needs are being met by this school.'

Inspectors spoke to parents during the inspection. Those spoken with in the playground said that they have no concerns about their child's safety in school. However, when answering Ofsted's online questionnaire, one parent thought that teachers could do more if pupils are unkind to one another.

During the inspection, pupils often disrupted lessons. In some cases, this disrupted learning for a significant number of pupils. Pupils spoken with confirmed that this is

often the case. Leaders use internal exclusions, but they do not keep records of how often they use this sanction. There are no records of meetings following exclusion to help pupils get back into the classroom. Governors are not checking this well enough, so they are not able to challenge leaders about this aspect of their work.

There are some strengths in the school's curriculum for personal development. Pupils take part in personal, social, health and economic education weekly and learn how to keep themselves healthy. Teachers teach pupils how to stay safe. Pupils have opportunities to develop leadership skills as 'friendship ambassadors' or as representatives on the school council. Pupils value the extracurricular clubs at lunchtimes. However, despite the school's context, leaders do not teach pupils about the different beliefs and cultures within the community well enough.

A minority of pupils are not tolerant and respectful of differences. Some pupils have been involved in bullying, including using names that are racist or homophobic. A small number of pupils say that if pupils had lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) parents they might be bullied. School leaders are working on this. They have begun to include, for example, texts in reading to rapidly develop pupils' understanding of the protected characteristics.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make all the necessary checks on the premises to make sure that the site is safe. Leaders regularly report to governors about safeguarding.

Safeguarding leaders are well trained. They act quickly when they have concerns about pupils' safety and well-being. They work closely with other professionals to get pupils the extra help that they need. Some parents told inspectors that their children feel safe at school. They said teachers are 'kind and understanding'.

A very high proportion of parents remove pupils from the school without telling anyone. This does not help school leaders to improve pupils' attendance to be at least in line with the national average. Leaders notify the local authority immediately, and lots of checks are made to try to make sure that these pupils are safe. Leaders act very quickly to refer pupils who they think may be at risk of female genital mutilation.

Pupils remember what they have learned about keeping themselves safe, including on the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is inconsistency in the quality of education in the early years. Children are not learning basic skills quickly. Leaders should ensure that children can communicate, read and achieve a basic fluency in number by the time they leave the Reception Year. Leaders should ensure that the early years leader is given leadership time to train staff and monitor the rate of improvement.
- The teaching of reading is weak. Too many pupils in every year group cannot read as well as they should. Leaders should improve the teaching of reading as a matter of urgency. They should do this by, raising teachers' expectations of what pupils who speak English as an additional language can achieve. Leaders should ensure that all pupils are given equal opportunities to learn the phonics programme that is intended for their age. Leaders should ensure that books are well matched to pupils' phonics knowledge. Teachers should give pupils enough practice reading well-matched books to an adult so that pupils become fluent and confident readers.
- Middle and senior leaders do not have the skills to improve the quality of education in the school. This means that there have been limited opportunities for example, for teachers to develop their subject knowledge and ensure that work is appropriate for pupils' needs and abilities. The assessment system in place is contributing to teachers' workload. Leaders should develop their leadership skills so that they know what to do to enable the school to improve.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are inadequate. Governors' challenge to leaders does not result in improvement, including in pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Leaders should report the impact of actions they have taken to improve pupils' behaviour and reduce bullying. Governors should discharge their statutory duties to ensure that exclusion and internal exclusion are being used appropriately and promote equality for all pupils, including those with protected characteristics. Governors should monitor the use of reduced timetables and challenge the impact of leaders' work to meet the needs of pupils who have additional social and emotional needs.
- Attendance rates at this school are unacceptably low. The high proportion of pupils who are absent without notification contributes to this. Leaders should help parents to understand the importance of informing staff if they choose to withdraw pupils from school. This will help the local authority to ensure that pupils who are 'missing in education' are safe.
- Pupils are not educated well enough about other faiths and cultures. Some pupils show intolerance and disrespect to pupils of different faiths and cultures. Leaders should improve the curriculum for pupils' personal development so that pupils learn about the beliefs that others may hold. This will ensure that pupils are better prepared for life in modern Britain.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	106839
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	10121733
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	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andrew Bull
Headteacher	Helen Simpson
Website	www.ferhamprimary.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	21–22 May 2015

Information about this school

- Governors are consulting parents about conversion to academy status. An academy order was issued in October 2019. Leaders from James Montgomery Academy Trust are undertaking due diligence with a view to taking oversight of the school as soon as possible.
- This school has a high proportion of pupils from different ethnic groups. There is higher than average pupil mobility.
- This school includes provision for two-year olds.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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.

This school should not employ newly qualified teachers.

- During the inspection, we met the headteacher, a group of four governors, including the chair of the governing body, the interim head of education for the local authority, the chief executive officer of the James Montgomery Academy Trust and senior and middle leaders.
- We looked in depth at reading, mathematics, art and design and geography.
- We spoke to pupils about their learning and heard pupils read. We visited lessons and discussed pupils' work with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher and subject leaders. We discussed pupils' learning with teachers, following visits to their lessons. We asked them about their training and workload.
- We spoke to pupils and staff at breaktime and during lunch. We also spoke to pupils in separate focus groups.
- We evaluated documentation, including the school improvement plan, minutes of meetings of the governing body, documents linked to pupils with SEND, records of behaviour and exclusions and safeguarding records.
- We read reports that followed local authority visits and the local authority learning review that took place in November 2019. The local authority provided minutes of 'school causing concern' meetings they had held with the headteacher and the chair of the governing body.
- We considered the Ofsted survey responses from 24 staff and nine parents. We also spoke to parents before school. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Tracey Ralph, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Soutar	Ofsted Inspector
Darren Marks	Ofsted Inspector

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