

# Inspection of Sledmere Primary School

The School Drive, Off Buffery Road, Dudley, West Midlands DY2 8EH

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Inspection dates: 29 and 30 March 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Early years provision

**Inadequate**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Leaders' expectations of what pupils can achieve academically are not high enough. Until recently, leaders did not ensure that the curriculum was taught in a way that helped all pupils to read well or to know more and remember more over time across most subjects. Parents also raise concerns that expectations are not high enough for their children.

Where routines are in place, such as walking to assembly, pupils are calm and orderly. They follow instructions and participate appropriately. Leaders have clear expectations of pupils' behaviour but some staff do not consistently follow the behaviour policy. As a result, pupils do not behave well enough in some classrooms and they do not learn as well as they should.

Pupils are happy and feel safe at school. They are courteous and respectful. For example, pupils hold doors open for visitors, staff and pupils. Relationships in school are positive. When bullying happens, leaders deal with it according to the school policy.

Pupils enjoy attending the school's breakfast club. They take part in a wide range of after-school sports activities, including cross-country and fencing. Pupils fundraise for chosen charities, such as counting sweets in a jar to raise money for a children's hospice.

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

Leaders, including governors, care about the school and its pupils. However, the school has experienced a difficult time during the past few years, including, but not solely related to, the pandemic. Until recently, the school has not been well supported by the trust. This has made it difficult for leaders to make the improvements necessary to ensure a good quality of education for all pupils.

Leaders have recently redesigned the curriculum. It now sets out the key knowledge they want pupils to learn. Teachers know what they should be teaching and when they should teach it. However, leaders do not know how well the curriculum supports pupils' learning. They have not established ways of checking what is happening in lessons. Teachers do not expect enough of pupils because they do not have secure subject knowledge. Teachers' checks on pupils' learning are not helping pupils to improve. This means that pupils are not well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

Children do not get off to a strong start in the early years. Leaders have not set out what it is they want children to know. Staff do not ensure that clear routines are in place to help children develop independence and know what to do. As a result, some of the youngest children become unsettled during the day. They struggle to focus on their learning and this limits the progress they make. Many children are at

the early stages of learning how to hold a conversation. Staff do not talk with children in a way that helps them know more words or how to use them in their daily conversations.

Early reading is not taught effectively. Phonics teaching is inconsistent. Some staff do not follow the school's approach to sounding out letters. Staff have not made sure pupils learn sounds in the planned way. The work set does not allow pupils to practice the sounds they are learning. This means that pupils do not develop the fluency they need to be able to read well.

Leaders have not ensured that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or those who are disadvantaged are identified swiftly enough. Leaders do not make sure that these pupils get the specific help they need. There are missed opportunities to adapt resources and lessons to meet pupils' individual needs effectively. As a result, pupils fall behind in their learning. This is especially the case in reading.

Attendance rates for some pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, remain low despite leaders' best efforts to work with pupils and their families. Staff quickly follow up any absence, but leaders know more work is needed to help pupils attend more regularly.

A strength of the school's work is how well it supports pupils' personal development. Opportunities to be a house captain, science ambassador or school councillor allow pupils to take on responsibilities. They develop confidence and communication skills. In personal, social and health education lessons, pupils learn how to share ideas and feelings. They listen carefully to the opinions of others. The pastoral support team provides effective help and advice to pupils. This helps pupils to focus on their learning and to do their best. Staff teach pupils to recognise and respect individual differences, and to understand the harm caused by discrimination.

Leaders and governors have worked hard to manage the high staff turnover and maintain staff morale through the turbulence of recent years. They are considerate and supportive of staff workload and well-being. Current interim trustees are supporting leaders to focus on improving the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff understand their role in keeping children safe. Staff record and report any concerns to safeguarding leaders, including sexual harassment and domestic abuse. Leaders seek the right support for vulnerable pupils. They seek support from external agencies when needed.

Pupils learn about how to maintain healthy relationships and keep safe when online.

The local police help pupils to think about how to deal with problems they might face outside school. Pupils learn how to behave safely in a range of situations, for example around dogs.

Leaders ensure the appropriate checks on staff are undertaken before they are appointed.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders have been too slow to implement the revised curriculum. They have not yet evaluated the impact that the curriculum is having on what pupils know and remember. Leaders should support subject leaders to evaluate the impact of the curriculum to ensure that pupils know more and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Teachers do not use assessment well to identify accurate next steps for pupils. This means teaching is not well matched to what pupils can already do and pupils' attitudes to learning decline. Leaders should ensure that teachers use the information they have about pupils to carefully plan what comes next so that pupils are suitably challenged and engage positively in their learning and achieve well.
- The youngest pupils do not have access to effective early years provision. Leaders have not yet identified the key knowledge they expect children to gain in the early years. Staff do not model vocabulary well enough. Leaders should ensure an effective early years curriculum, clear routines and a supportive learning environment are put in place so that the youngest pupils are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- Early reading is not taught effectively because staff do not have the knowledge to teach reading well. This limits pupils' learning and they do not read sufficiently well for their age. Leaders should develop staff subject knowledge and expertise, so that they teach phonics and early reading more effectively.
- Provision for most pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils does not meet their needs. This means that pupils do not get the help and support they need to be successful learners. Leaders should ensure that staff receive the training they need to identify and support all pupils effectively.
- A number of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, do not attend school regularly enough. This means gaps emerge in their learning and they struggle to develop positive attitudes to learning. Leaders should take further steps to work with pupils and their families to instil the importance of attending school regularly so that attendance improves for these pupils.
- Having considered the evidence, I strongly recommend that leaders and those responsible for governance do not seek to appoint early career teachers.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	144081
<b>Local authority</b>	Dudley
<b>Inspection number</b>	10212342
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	629
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Pam Garrington
<b>Headteacher</b>	Derek Fance
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sledmere.org">www.sledmere.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- This school uses two registered alternative providers.
- This school joined the Learning Link Multi-Academy Trust in November 2017. The school is due to join another trust in the near future.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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 was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in geography, reading, mathematics, science and music. These included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, examining curriculum documents and talking with pupils and staff. They also looked at work from a sample of other subjects.
- The lead inspector looked at a range of documentation on the school's website as part of the preparatory work.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding arrangements. This included examining the single central record of employment checks on school staff.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils and observed pupils' behaviour in class and at other times during the day.
- During the inspection, inspectors had formal meetings with the headteacher, acting deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, subject leaders, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, the designated safeguarding lead, the early years leader, governors, the acting chief executive of the trust and the acting chair of the trust.
- The lead inspector took account of responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, the pupils' survey and the staff's survey.

## **Inspection team**

Lorraine Lord, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Orgill	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Maybank	Ofsted Inspector
Mel Davies	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Hickerton	Ofsted Inspector

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