

Sandhill Primary School

Dearne Street, Great Houghton, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S72 0EQ

Inspection dates

20–21 March 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The trust and senior leaders have not taken effective action to prevent a decline in the school’s performance at key stage 2 since the school became an academy.
- For the last two years, the progress of Year 6 pupils has been below average in reading and mathematics. Too few pupils reach the higher standards in the early years and at key stages 1 and 2.
- Parents are rightly concerned about the effect of the turnover of staff on the continuity of teaching and leadership. Leaders have not communicated effectively enough with parents to allay their concerns.
- Leaders’ monitoring and evaluation has not been sharp enough to identify and rectify weaknesses in teaching and learning.
- Inconsistency in teaching has led to weaknesses in learning and progress at key stage 2. The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics requires improvement.
- A few pupils’ lack of engagement in lessons occasionally interferes with the learning of others.
- Persistent absence is too high and a few pupils are not punctual to school.
- In the early years, a lack of focus in the planning of play and in adult interaction limits children’s learning and development.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior and middle leaders have taken effective steps in the current school year to improve the teaching of aspects of reading, writing and mathematics, especially at key stage 2.
- Pupils are achieving well in phonics and in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 1.
- Most pupils are well behaved, are keen to learn and display positive attitudes.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of leadership and management to accelerate the rate of school improvement by:
 - increasing the drive and expertise of senior leadership
 - sharpening the quality of monitoring and evaluation
 - improving the strategic direction provided by the trust
 - increasing the stability and capacity of school leadership
 - developing the role and initiative of middle leaders so they have a greater impact on the consistency of teaching and learning
 - working strategically with good or better schools outside the trust to improve teaching, learning and assessment
 - communicating effectively with parents and carers to secure high levels of engagement and satisfaction with the school.
- Improve the consistency and quality of teaching and learning to increase the progress pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly at key stage 2, by ensuring that:
 - high expectations enable more pupils to reach the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics, at all key stages
 - teachers use examples skilfully and accurately to promote pupils' learning
 - feedback to pupils is specific and constructive and complies with school policy
 - the quality of presentation is consistently good across all subjects and year groups
 - the teaching of writing enables pupils to make consistently good progress in each year group.
- In the early years ensure that:
 - consistently purposeful play interests children, sustains their concentration and develops specific areas of learning well
 - high-quality questioning by adults deepens and extends children's learning
 - children develop their early writing skills securely.
- Improve pupils' behaviour, especially boys', by developing approaches that support their personal, emotional and academic development effectively.
- Reduce persistent absence and improve punctuality to school.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Senior leaders have not demonstrated enough drive or expertise to prevent the decline in progress made by Year 6 pupils at the end of key stage 2, in reading and mathematics. The executive headteacher has not taken enough responsibility for directing, supporting and evaluating school improvement. Leaders' records are not organised well or easily accessible. Consequently, the executive headteacher and new head of school did not have key information readily available and could not explain clearly to inspectors the impact of leaders' actions.
- At present, the leadership structure is unstable and capacity is limited. The high turnover of staff and leaders means that several leaders are relatively new to their role or temporary. Key posts await appointments.
- Parents expressed a high level of concern about the changes in staffing and the effects on their children. Their confidence in the school's leadership and management is low. Leaders have not communicated with and engaged parents well enough.
- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is not sufficiently systematic, frequent or sharply focused. As a result, leaders' knowledge and evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning are not sufficiently accurate. Leaders' actions have not been quick or precise enough and improvement has been slow. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment remains inconsistent.
- Leaders do not analyse behaviour patterns and attendance records in sufficient detail so staff have not been quick enough to take prompt and effective action.
- Leaders have not worked closely enough with good or better schools outside the trust to check the accuracy of assessment or to accelerate improvements in teaching and learning.
- Recent monitoring of pupils' progress has led to effective identification of pupils' needs and the actions to meet them. Leaders are demonstrating early impact in tackling the weaker progress made by pupils in reading and mathematics at key stage 2.
- The recently appointed interim head of school has begun to take effective action to improve the quality of the early years. In the last term, a trust leader has made improvements in the teaching of mathematics at key stage 2. Leaders have taken appropriate steps to improve the teaching of reading and writing. These are at an early stage and the impact is variable across key stage 2 classes. Leaders are beginning to develop the science curriculum effectively. The leadership post for the early years is vacant and the special educational needs (SEN) coordinator role is temporary. Appropriate procedures are in place to recruit to vacant posts.
- Professional development has recently improved the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. Recent coaching activities have improved specific aspects of teaching. Leaders support newly qualified teachers effectively and they are developing well.
- Leaders were slow to adapt to the demands of curriculum changes for reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 2, but are now catching up. In Year 6, teaching is

temporarily prioritising preparation for the end of year statutory tests, including a well-run booster group for the most able. The curriculum provides a broad and balanced range of subjects. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply and develop their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Leaders are currently reviewing the provision of personal, social and health education. Leaders plan to make better links with school assemblies in order to strengthen pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and improve their understanding of British values.

- Leaders deploy pupil premium funding appropriately to improve the personal and academic development of disadvantaged pupils. However, leaders do not formally identify the barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils or explain how additional funding is overcoming those barriers. Leaders use the physical education and sports premium funding appropriately to provide lunchtime activities and a wide range of after-school sports. Detailed records measure participation, including by disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.

Governance of the school

- The trust did not prevent a decline in the school's performance at key stage 2. It has not ensured that leaders maintain the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupil outcomes at this school, while also providing support for another school.
- The trust has not clarified or documented the rationale for, or the responsibilities of, the executive headteacher and chief executive officer roles. The roles are confused and it is not clear which post the current leader holds. The trust has not provided effective strategic direction for school leadership or school improvement.
- The local governing board recognises the weaknesses in pupils' progress. Governors understand and check the actions taken by leaders to tackle them. Governors are knowledgeable about key aspects of the school through well-focused visits. They keep a close check on safeguarding actions.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Well-trained and vigilant staff identify and monitor concerns closely. Leaders keep staff up to date with potential safeguarding issues. Leaders have taken appropriate action to improve site security. Staff know how to make a referral and are not afraid to do so. Staff actions are timely and they follow up incidents and any family issues tenaciously. Computer-based records enable staff to monitor incidents and actions effectively. Staff share information appropriately with other agencies.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Weakness in the teaching of reading comprehension, and of mathematical reasoning and problem-solving, resulted in a lack of learning and progress at key stage 2 over time.
- The teaching of writing is not consistently good and pupils are making limited progress in some year groups. Teachers do not use examples skilfully or precisely enough to

show pupils exactly how to develop their writing.

- Similarly, in some teaching, pupils do not fully understand the task because the teacher does not show them how to do it. Teachers also miss opportunities to check pupils' understanding before they move on. Questioning is sometimes not probing or challenging enough. On these occasions, pupils make slower progress and a few disengage from learning.
- Teachers do not always spell accurately the words they expect the pupils to spell. On occasion, adults are not careful enough to speak in correct forms of Standard English to reinforce pupils' learning of phonics.
- Teachers are not consistently meeting the objectives of the school policy on feedback. Some feedback does not provide specific guidance to pupils about how to improve their work.
- The quality of presentation in pupils' literacy, mathematics and topic books is too variable.
- Teachers generally use their positive relationships with pupils well to promote positive attitudes to learning.
- Teachers are beginning to improve pupils' use of mathematical methods and their skills in reasoning and problem-solving by focusing tasks explicitly on these skills.
- Sharper questioning in reading lessons is enabling some pupils to read text with greater understanding.
- In some lessons during the inspection, pupils engaged well in learning. Pupils knew exactly what to do from the clear examples provided by the teacher and the teaching assistant. Well-organised resources enabled them to get on with the task quickly and productively. Probing questions extended their thinking.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Staff are not tackling the inappropriate behaviour of a few pupils effectively enough. The school has not developed effective enough approaches to meet pupils' personal, emotional and academic needs, including the needs of those pupils who have special educational needs.
- A minority of parents are concerned about the effect of staff changes on the well-being and welfare of their child.
- Pupils are keen to learn and want to do well. Most pupils display positive attitudes and want to do the right thing.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and the great majority of parents agree. Pupils spoke confidently about the actions taken to improve pupils' awareness of road safety. They were able to explain the actions they take to be safe when using social media.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- In some lessons, a few pupils, especially boys, are slow to start work, or they become inattentive and lose focus. Sometimes, this interferes with the learning of well-behaved pupils.
- Pupils generally behave well around the school, although a few boys are a little boisterous.
- Absence and persistent absence increased in the 2016/17 school year and were above the national average. Absence and persistent absence have reduced this school year but persistent absence remains too high. A few pupils are not punctual enough to school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2016 and 2017, at the end of key stage 2, the progress that Year 6 pupils made from their starting points at the end of key stage 1 was below average in reading and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was above average in 2016. In 2017, the proportion of Year 6 pupils at, or above, the expected standard was well below average in mathematics and below average in reading and writing. Pupils were not prepared well enough for secondary school.
- At key stage 2 in 2017, disadvantaged pupils made less progress than other pupils did nationally.
- Current school data from Year 6 mock tests indicates that attainment, at this point, is higher in mathematics than at the same time last year. This represents improved progress. This is the result of improved teaching of mathematics in Year 6 and the impact of the booster classes. The proportion currently meeting the expected standard in reading is similar to the previous year but more pupils are working at the higher standard, due to teachers' sharper focus on pupils' reading and comprehension skills. Currently, the proportion meeting the expected standard in writing is lower than in the previous year.
- In Years 3, 4 and 5, school assessments show that pupils in the majority of year groups and subjects have made reasonable progress in the current school year towards their end-of-year targets. However, in each year group, pupils are not making enough progress in at least one subject. Generally, across key stage 2, current progress and attainment in writing is weaker than in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils' reading comprehension remains a weaker aspect, as some pupils do not read regularly at home.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 1 who met the expected standard in phonics was average in previous years but dipped in 2017. Targeted teaching, and close monitoring by the phonics leader, is enabling current Year 1 pupils to make secure progress in phonics.

- At key stage 1, in 2016 and 2017, the proportion of pupils at the expected standard was at, or above, national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. In addition, disadvantaged pupils attained as well as all pupils did nationally. However, fewer pupils than average reached the higher standard in reading, writing or mathematics at the end of key stage 1. In 2017, the local authority confirmed the accuracy of teachers' assessment at the end of key stage 1. Current school assessments indicate that attainment is higher in Year 2 than at this time last year. Samples of current pupils' writing in Years 1 and 2 indicate that pupils have made at least expected progress during this school year.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The early years provision is well equipped and has good resources. However, adults do not design learning experiences sufficiently well to engage children's interest or sustain their concentration in learning. As a result, some children lack purpose in their play, become aimless and flit between activities. Adults do not intervene effectively to show children what to do, or redirect children quickly or firmly enough. Dialogue and questioning do not deepen or extend children's learning sufficiently.
- Adults miss opportunities to develop children's reading, writing and counting in their play. Some literacy and numeracy activities are not sufficiently challenging. Adults are not using assessment sharply enough to identify next steps.
- Teaching does not develop writing effectively enough. Children do not always sit correctly to write accurately. Teachers do not identify and correct letter inversions before children rub their writing off the whiteboard. The teaching of cursive and non-cursive handwriting is inconsistent between the classes with Reception children.
- Children enter Nursery and Reception at broadly typical levels of development. At the end of the early years, the proportion reaching a good level of development was broadly average for the last three years. However, few have exceeded the expected standards in reading, writing or mathematics. Leaders are not entirely confident about the accuracy of assessment or of children's readiness to start Year 1. As a result, leaders are seeking an external check on teacher assessment this year.
- Over the previous three years, the proportion of disadvantaged children who reached a good level of development declined to below average, compared with all children nationally. School assessment indicates higher outcomes by disadvantaged children in the current year.
- Children behave safely. They are polite and they collaborate well.
- The interim head of school has recently taken over the leadership of the early years. She has quickly and accurately identified weaknesses in the provision and is beginning to implement actions to bring about improvement.

School details

Unique reference number	141917
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	10042188

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	314
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Eileen Parry
Executive Headteacher	Judith Hirst
Telephone number	01226 345030
Website	www.sandhillprimary.org.uk
Email address	b.white@shiremat.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is a member of the Shire Multi-Academy Trust with one other local primary school. This inspection is the first inspection of the school since it became an academy in April 2015. In addition to the board of trustees, the school has a local governing body.
- Prior to joining the trust, the predecessor school was last inspected in October 2012, when it was judged to be good.
- The interim head of school joined the school in February 2018.
- It is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above the average for primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is low.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for SEN and/or disabilities is below

average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes and carried out some observations jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons and reviewed samples of pupils' books with school leaders.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and their experiences at school. Inspectors also listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors held discussions with the executive headteacher, senior and middle leaders, members of the local governing board and a representative of the Shire Multi-Academy Trust, and groups of pupils. An inspector spoke to parents bringing their children to school and held a meeting with one parent.
- Inspectors checked the school website and evaluated a wide range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation, information about pupils' progress, and behaviour, attendance and safeguarding records.
- The inspection took account of the 37 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 23 written responses. Inspectors also took account of the 50 responses from pupils and the three responses from staff to Ofsted's online questionnaires.

Inspection team

Bernard Campbell, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mary Lanovy-Taylor	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Scargill	Ofsted Inspector

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