

Gentleshaw Primary School

Darlings Lane, Gentleshaw, Rugeley, Staffordshire WS15 4LY

Inspection dates 3–4 February 2016

Overall effectiveness **Inadequate**

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and managers have been ineffective in resolving issues, including those related to the quality of teaching, pupils' progress and staffing. Consequently, standards have declined markedly since the last inspection.
- Teaching is inadequate. Poor teaching over time in Key Stage 2 has resulted in pupils making inadequate progress in a range of subjects, including writing and mathematics.
- Boys and pupils who have special educational needs or disability make very slow progress in Key Stage 2.
- The assessment system is not used by staff to plan activities which challenge and support pupils of different abilities. The most-able pupils are rarely stretched.
- There has been no clear leadership of key areas of the school's work, such as mathematics and the provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability.
- Leaders have not ensured that staff are kept up to date with changes to the National Curriculum or the most recent safeguarding information.
- Safeguarding is ineffective. The school's policy is not followed, required checks on the suitability of staff are not recorded correctly, records are disorganised or incomplete, and there have been times when a senior member of staff with designated responsibility for safeguarding has not been on site.
- Early years provision is inadequate, as safeguarding is ineffective in the school.
- A few pupils do not attend regularly and some miss school as a result of holidays.
- Some pupils in Key Stage 2 do not display positive attitudes to learning and they produce substandard work.
- Communication is poor. Parents, staff and governors are given inconsistent messages about decisions and staffing changes.
- Governors have not addressed the needs of the school in a strategic manner, so the standard of education has declined. They have also failed to ensure that the school meets its statutory duties.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher, supported by the associate headteacher, is taking immediate action to begin to address the areas above.
- Pupils in Reception and Key Stage 1 make better progress than those in Key Stage 2.

Full report

In accordance with 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 effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - taking immediate action to rapidly improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Key Stage 2
 - ensuring that all areas of the school's provision are well led and that new and emerging leaders are given appropriate support and training
 - developing the school's curriculum so that all areas are effectively covered and taught well
 - meeting all statutory safeguarding requirements and ensuring that the school's policy is carefully followed
 - providing consistent and accurate information to parents, pupils, staff and governors
 - ensuring governors strategically address the needs of the school
 - meeting all the Department for Education's statutory requirements and providing the required information for parents on the school website.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning, assessment and pupil outcomes by:
 - developing teachers' understanding of the new National Curriculum so that all subjects, including writing and mathematics, are taught well
 - providing additional training and support for all staff, including observing the best practice locally, to raise expectations of pupils' capabilities
 - insisting on the highest quality of work from all pupils, especially boys and those with special educational needs or disability, by giving precise feedback on how pupils can achieve this
 - developing the assessment system so that all staff can use it to plan appropriate activities that stretch and challenge all pupils, particularly the most able.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - developing pupils' attitudes to classwork, so they always make the most of the time available and produce their best work
 - working closely with the parents of pupils who do not attend regularly and take holidays in term time in order to improve their attendance.

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 is inadequate

- Standards have declined markedly since the last inspection, as leaders and managers have not taken effective action to resolve issues around the quality of teaching, pupils' progress and staffing. Several staff, including the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, are currently absent and others have recently left the school. Inconsistent, and often weak, teaching has led to poor progress in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils' outcomes are inadequate in Key Stage 2, as leaders have not done enough to improve weak teaching, learning and assessment practice over time. All groups of pupils, particularly boys and pupils who have special educational needs or disability, make slow progress. Action taken by leaders in an attempt to rectify this situation has been ineffective, so the school has not promoted equality of opportunity.
- The school's self-evaluation, produced by the headteacher, is largely accurate and highlights many of the key areas which are inadequate. However, it has not been used to inform action and bring about improvement.
- The school curriculum lacks depth and is poorly taught. Subjects such as science, history and geography are covered superficially. Staff lack the skills and knowledge to deliver the new National Curriculum. As a result, pupils are poorly prepared for secondary education.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have had few opportunities to develop their practice. For example, staff have not observed the best practice locally so they are unclear about what constitutes good teaching. The school's appraisal of staff has not been used effectively to improve the quality of teaching.
- Staff have not been given opportunities to lead areas of the school so, in the absence of senior leaders, key areas such as English, mathematics, safeguarding and the management of provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability have lacked leadership. The acting headteacher has taken prompt action to resolve this.
- Communication is ineffective. For example, staff have been given unclear messages about how to improve their practice. Most of the parents who spoke with inspectors highlighted poor communication from school leaders and governors as an issue.
- The vast majority of parents want their children to do well, so they are extremely supportive of the work of the school. They listen to their children read, encourage them to produce high-quality homework and attend events at the school. However, a few do not ensure that their children attend regularly. A number of parents are very concerned about the quality of education currently provided by the school, and less than half of those who responded to Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents) would recommend the school to another parent.
- Additional funding is used effectively. The pupil premium funding (additional government funding) has been used to improve the quality of education for eligible pupils. In addition, the school sports funding has had a positive impact on pupils' sporting achievements. In order to improve their practice, staff watch a sports coach deliver purposeful sessions and they receive help with their planning. New equipment has been purchased, sports clubs are well attended and plans for the first competitive football match at the school for a number of years are in place. Healthy eating is also encouraged at lunchtime and through the cookery club.
- There are a number of posters about British values around the school and pupils are encouraged to be tolerant and respectful. Pupils participate in the democratic process through school council elections and they follow the school rules. Activities and lessons, which cover different cultures and religions, have helped to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and prepare them for life in modern Britain. However, these aspects of their education are not fully developed.
- The local authority has offered little support to the school, as it was considered a low risk. However, after concerns were raised by the Chair of the Governing Body and outcomes declined in 2015, the local authority commissioned a range of support. This included a school review, regular visits from a consultant, input from a national leader of education support for the governing body from a national leader of governance and subject-specific help and guidance. The local authority also arranged for the acting headteacher, supported by the associate headteacher, to lead the school. Although they have only recently taken up their posts, they are starting to make a difference in improving the quality of teaching, raising standards and resolving staffing issues.

■ The governance of the school

- Governors have been focused on parental concerns and staffing issues, so they have not addressed the needs of the school in a strategic manner. Consequently, they have allowed the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, pupils' outcomes, personal development, behaviour and welfare, and the effectiveness of school leaders to decline.
 - Governors do not ensure that the school is fulfilling its statutory responsibilities. Safeguarding is ineffective and the school website does not include all the required information.
 - Governors have dedicated a great deal of time to the school and they are committed to securing improvement. They have received relevant information from the headteacher, and they visit the school regularly.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are ineffective. For example, at times there is no senior member of staff with designated responsibility for safeguarding on the school site. Written records about staff and pupils are disorganised, lacking information or not available. The checks made on staff's suitability to work with children are incomplete. Until recently, staff were unaware of their statutory safeguarding responsibilities. None of the governors have completed safer recruitment training and it is unclear how visitors or supply staff are made aware of safeguarding procedures in the school. The school's safeguarding policy has not been followed.
 - There have been no serious safeguarding incidents since the last inspection and minor concerns have been reported to outside agencies appropriately.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable across the school and much of it has been inadequate over time in Key Stage 2. This is due to the inadequate leadership of teaching, lack of suitable training and staff absence.
- Planning does not address the needs of the pupils in the class as teachers, particularly temporary teachers, do not have the information available to them to plan lessons which build upon prior learning. As one pupil told inspectors, 'They don't know us, so they don't know what we can do.'
- The assessment of pupils' work is weak. As a result, staff are unclear about what pupils can do and the progress they are making. Consequently, pupils of all abilities, particularly the most able, are not set work which allows them to make good progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make slow progress, as teachers rarely direct the work of teaching assistants and do not plan activities to meet pupils' needs. The impact of teaching assistants is variable across the school.
- Teachers do not plan lessons that challenge pupils to think for themselves or work things out. Activities are often too easy, most noticeably in Key Stage 2, so many pupils, particularly the most able, do not make the progress of which they are capable. Often all pupils complete the same work.
- Pupils are not given opportunities to develop their writing skills fully in English and other subjects, and extended writing is rare. Consequently, pupils of all abilities do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Many teachers do not have a secure subject knowledge of mathematics, so this subject is not well taught. Opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical skills in other subjects are rare. As a consequence, many pupils do not do well in this subject.
- Teachers have not had the training to deliver the National Curriculum effectively. A range of subjects, such as science and humanities, are poorly taught. Consequently, pupils make slow progress across the curriculum in Key Stage 2.
- The teaching of reading is effective. It is actively encouraged at school and at home, and pupils take opportunities to read a range of appropriate texts. There are reading areas around the school and most-able pupils read confidently. Pupils are able to work out words using phonics (letters and the sounds that they make), so most pupils of all abilities make reasonable progress in this subject.
- Teaching in Reception and Key Stage 1 is better than that elsewhere in the school. As a result, younger

pupils do well. There is some effective teaching in Key Stage 2, characterised by higher expectations, more challenge and good questioning. However, this is inconsistent so pupils in Key Stage 2 make inadequate progress.

- Marking has improved recently, but the feedback which pupils receive does not give them precise instructions on how to produce work of the highest quality. Some marking is more effective, as it helps pupils improve their work. The school's marking policy is not followed consistently.
- Teachers set appropriate homework and often the quality of what is produced is better than that produced in class.
- All classrooms are well organised, they have interesting and useful displays of pupils' work and information to help learning. However, inspectors did not see these used during the inspection.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. In some lessons in Key Stage 2, pupils do not display positive attitudes to learning and this slows down their progress.
- Pupils rarely disrupt the learning of others, but some sit quietly and produce little work and others are satisfied with poor presentation and a standard of work which is below their capabilities.
- Pupils' physical and emotional well-being are adequately promoted in school and they are taught to stay safe. They know how to stay safe when using the internet and all pupils, and most parents, who communicated with inspectors, indicated that they felt that pupils were safe in school.
- Pupils told inspectors that they were aware of different kinds of bullying and felt that unkindness was unusual in the school. They said that differences were accepted by other pupils and that they had learned about other cultures. They are also encouraged to recycle items such as mobile phones, spectacles and stamps for the benefit of people less fortunate than themselves.
- Personal development, self-confidence and self-awareness are developed effectively through the school's lunchtime arrangements. Each half term, boys and girls from different year groups sit together for lunch. This promotes positive social interaction and the older pupils set a good example to the younger ones.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement, as some teachers do not have high enough expectations of positive behaviour to allow good learning to take place. Pupils told inspectors that lessons were sometimes disrupted when they did not know the teacher or when the work was not interesting.
- Behaviour in some lessons is of a high standard. Pupils behave well when they are engaged and challenged by the work. They usually listen carefully to staff and others, and enjoy positive relationships with adults and other pupils.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered. Behaviour observed in the dining hall was calm and sensible, and pupils are considerate of others when they are playing outside.
- Most pupils attend well and many have high attendance. However, some pupils are frequently absent so the school's overall attendance figure is close to the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

are inadequate

- Pupils make inadequate progress in Key Stage 2. There was a sharp decline in outcomes for last year's Year 6 and pupils made slow progress, particularly in mathematics and writing, in 2013 and 2015.
- All groups of pupils, including the most able, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability, made slow progress in mathematics and writing in 2015. A smaller proportion than the national average made the progress expected of them in these subjects, and no pupils made rapid progress.
- Pupils' progress in reading was better than that in writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils making the progress expected of them was larger than the national average. However, the proportion of pupils doing well is less than national figures.

- Rapid progress is rare in all subjects, as teachers do not plan lessons that move learning on quickly. These low expectations hold all pupils back, particularly the most able.
- Pupils currently in Key Stage 2, particularly in Years 4 and 5, continue to make slow progress in almost all subject areas. There are few signs of improvement. High-ability pupils are not being challenged to produce work of the highest quality and boys, and pupils with special educational needs or disability, are making very slow progress.
- Current pupils continue to make better progress in reading than in other areas and Year 3 pupils are making faster progress than other pupils in Key Stage 2.
- Outcomes in Key Stage 1 have been strong for the last five years and pupils continue to progress well in this key stage. Phonics is taught effectively and almost all pupils reached the expected standard in last year's phonics check.
- Reception children are well prepared for Year 1, and Key Stage 1 pupils are well prepared for Key Stage 2. However, slow progress in Key Stage 2 means that too many pupils leave Year 6 without the skills, knowledge and understanding that they need to be ready for secondary education.

Early years provision

is inadequate

- Inadequate safeguarding procedures mean that school leaders can not be completely assured that children are kept safe. Therefore early years provision is inadequate.
- Procedures to keep children safe in Reception are in place. Controlled access to the classroom, daily risk assessments, careful monitoring and recording of children's behaviour, and the presence of at least one paediatric first aider all contribute to the safety of the children in Reception.
- The majority of children enter Reception with skills and knowledge in line with, or above, those typical for their age. As a result of effective teaching, more than the national average leave the Reception class with the expected skills in communication and language, literacy and number. A greater proportion than national figures reach a good level of development and most children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Boys have continued to make good progress and girls are now making similar progress to the boys in most areas, with the exception of self-awareness and self-confidence. Other groups, such as the most able, are making the progress expected of them.
- As the Reception Year children are taught with Year 1 pupils, this helps them to quickly adjust to the expectations of Year 1. However, it also means that in some lessons, where the whole class are taught together, Reception Year children have few opportunities to become fully involved in the learning.
- Children are given limited opportunities to explore new skills independently and learn through well-planned play. The phase leader has been given conflicting advice about how to manage the mixed-age class. Opportunities to develop these areas and promote creativity are priorities for the phase leader.
- The early years leader has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and has ensured that accurate assessment and record keeping are in place. The development of children's skills is monitored effectively and, where possible, changes to provision are made. However, many of these changes are recent and have not yet had an impact.
- Staff know the children well and use effective questioning to develop understanding. Children behave well and listen carefully. They have good levels of concentration, participate well with each other, when they are given the opportunity, and are considerate of others.
- Communication with parents is a strength. Parents are involved with their children's learning and they value the happy learning environment in the class.

School details

Unique reference number	124210
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10011305

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	140
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jill Painter
Headteacher	Christine Willoughby
Telephone number	01543 682476
Website	www.gentleshaw.staffs.sch.uk
Email address	office@gentleshaw.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 June 2009

Information about this school

- Gentleshaw Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. Of the small number who are from minority ethnic groups, very few speak English as an additional language.
- There are currently no pupils supported by the pupil premium and proportions are usually very small.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below average.
- The school does not meet the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is before- and after-school care on site. This provision is run independently and was not included in this inspection.
- The headteacher, who took up post in January 2015, was absent during the inspection. The deputy headteacher was also absent.
- The school is currently being led by an acting headteacher, supported by an associate headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out following concerns raised with Ofsted.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 11 parts of lessons. Four of these observations were carried out jointly with the acting headteacher.
- Members of the inspection team met with pupils and heard a small number of pupils read. They looked at examples of pupils' work in their books and spoke to some pupils informally.
- Inspectors held meetings with the acting headteacher, the associate headteacher and other members of staff.
- Meetings were also held with three governors, including the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, and two representatives of the local authority. The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with the national leader of governance, who has been supporting governors at the school.
- The opinions of parents were considered through 45 responses on Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents), six letters and conversations with parents during the course of the inspection.
- Various school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation, local authority reports, minutes of meetings of the governing body and information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Simon Mosley, lead inspector
Michael Appleby

Her Majesty's Inspector
Ofsted Inspector

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