

# Spelthorne School

Feltham Hill Road, Ashford Common, Middlesex TW15 1LP

## Inspection dates

3–4 May 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Safeguarding is ineffective. Systems and processes to keep pupils safe are not fit for purpose.
- Leadership has been weak. For a number of years leaders have not held staff to account.
- In recent years, standards have been declining in all key stages. Current pupils are not making good progress or achieving their potential.
- Frequent changes in leadership over the last year have left teachers confused about what is expected of them. As a result, teaching is currently inadequate.
- Governors have not fulfilled their statutory duties and have not challenged leaders about the school's underperformance.
- Following amalgamation, leaders have not created a culture of one school with one staff team that operates for the benefit of all pupils.
- Assessment information is inaccurate. Parents do not know how well their children are doing.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who attend the speech, language and communication centres, is inadequate. Support staff are not well trained or deployed.
- Disadvantaged pupils are underachieving. The pupil premium is not spent effectively to help them catch up with others nationally.
- Provision for children in the early years is inadequate. Welfare requirements are not met and the curriculum organisation restricts children's learning.
- Some pupils feel unsafe because of bullying and inappropriate behaviour at playtimes. The school does not routinely record, monitor or evaluate incidents of this kind.
- Attendance is below average and declining.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils have positive attitudes to school and their learning. They behave well in class and are polite and friendly to visitors.
- Parents and pupils are optimistic about the school's future. Teachers work hard and are committed to doing the best job possible.

## 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 safeguarding procedures by ensuring that:
  - there is a senior leader responsible for all aspects of safeguarding in the school
  - all staff understand and act upon all policies that relate to keeping pupils safe
  - pupils' medical needs are met adequately, making certain that policy and practice fulfil the requirements of the latest Department for Education guidance.
- Improve governance, leadership and management, by:
  - ensuring that leaders at all levels have clear roles and responsibilities
  - providing regular performance management for all staff
  - ensuring that pupil premium funding has a measurable impact on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils
  - checking that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are correctly identified
  - making sure that specific funding allocated for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used effectively to improve their provision and progress
  - using sport premium funding appropriately to improve participation and the quality of provision in a range of sports and physical activities.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment so that outcomes improve for all groups of pupils by ensuring that:
  - there is a consistent and accurate method of assessment used throughout the school
  - teachers plan lessons that build on what pupils can already do and what they need to learn still
  - pupils who have fallen behind in their learning are identified and helped to catch up quickly
  - the most able pupils are given appropriately challenging work
  - additional adults are used effectively to have a positive impact on learning.
- Improve the early years provision, by:
  - allowing children to have easy access to effective indoor and outdoor learning
  - providing opportunities for children to sustain their involvement in activities and

develop in all areas of learning

- engaging parents more frequently in their child's learning.
- Ensure that incidents of bullying and poor behaviour are recorded accurately and effective action is taken by leaders and other staff to address concerns.
- Work with families to take effective action to improve attendance across the school.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order 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 have been unable to create a culture of 'one school'. Nearly six years after the amalgamation, many staff still talk about the separate infant or junior schools. Some staff do not see that they have a role to play, working together, to help pupils throughout the whole school to thrive.
- Standards began to decline soon after the previous inspection in 2012. Leaders were ineffective and did not address this decline adequately. They did not challenge poor performance from staff.
- Since the substantive headteacher left in September 2016, there have been three different interim headteachers prior to The Howard Partnership Trust working with the school. They have each had commendable but different approaches to leadership. These different approaches to the leadership of teaching and learning have caused confusion among the staff. As a result of the turbulence in leadership, any improvements in teaching and outcomes have been minor and not sustained.
- Performance management and professional development of staff remain weak. Some teachers have targets that relate to assessment information that is inaccurate or they do not understand. Teachers who are new to the profession do not receive adequate support, mentoring or time to help them develop their skills.
- Leaders, including the substantive deputy headteachers and those responsible for year groups or key subjects, are enthusiastic and hardworking. They have been helping to solve operational problems and provide cover for absent teachers. However, they have lacked strategic guidance from senior leaders to help them raise standards adequately.
- The pupil premium has not been used effectively. Disadvantaged pupils are not catching up with their peers. There is not currently a leader responsible for this provision or the funding.
- The leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been weak for a number of years. Provision, including in the speech and language centres, does not meet the needs of pupils. Therefore, specific funding for special educational needs has not been used effectively. Some pupils have been incorrectly labelled as having special educational needs because they have fallen behind in their learning due to poor teaching.
- The curriculum enables pupils to access a wide range of subjects. However, in some classes there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in different subjects effectively. This is because too much focus is placed on developing pupils' cross-curricular literacy skills.
- School trips, including residential visits, provide opportunities to enhance pupils' experiences and understanding. There is a very limited range of extra-curricular activities for pupils to try.
- Sport premium funding has not been used to develop pupils' participation and improve their skills. Current plans for improvement are weak and previous actions have not been evaluated.

- There is not a clear strategy to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils do not have a deep understanding of fundamental British values. However, they do have strong morals and a determination to always do what is right.
- The very new leadership team has already started to gain the trust of pupils, staff and parents. Together with the existing deputy headteachers, they have an accurate view of the school's weaknesses and know what needs to be improved. Staff are looking forward to a greater clarity about expectations and are willing to work hard to make the necessary improvements.

### **Governance of the school**

- Most members of the governing body were not aware that the local authority had significant concerns about the performance of the school until the start of this academic year. There had not been a culture of sharing essential information with governors, so they were unable to challenge leaders about weaknesses.
- Since her appointment in September 2016, the chair of the governing body has begun to improve the effectiveness of governance. She has sought additional training, ensures that the governing body offers greater challenge to leaders and has led a process to secure the future leadership of the school.
- Notwithstanding this recent improvement, governors have failed to ensure that pupil premium, special educational needs and sport premium funding has been spent effectively. Furthermore, they have not ensured that the school has complied with statutory requirements around safeguarding, special educational needs and the induction of newly qualified teachers. They have not checked for themselves that policies they have approved have been applied correctly by staff.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Leaders, managers and governors have not ensured that pupils are safe from harm and that there is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. There is not a senior member of staff with overall responsibility for safeguarding. As a result, there are gaps in systems and processes, and pupils are put at risk. Not all staff have a secure understanding of the school's policies and procedures. Governors have not ensured that leaders acted upon the action points from a local authority review of safeguarding quickly enough.
- Procedures to care for pupils who have medical needs are not adequate. Parents and pupils expressed concerns to inspectors about the care received. Some staff do not know that some pupils in their class have medical conditions, others do not know how to safely manage the conditions pupils have. Medication is not stored safely. The policy that governors agreed for medical care is not followed. Staff do not know who is responsible for overseeing the care of pupils with medical needs. Nor do they know who is trained to administer medication or which colleagues are trained in first aid. Risk assessments for trips and visits are generic and do not refer to the needs of individual pupils.
- Historically, the designated lead for safeguarding has not been a member of the senior

leadership team. However, she has worked tirelessly and effectively to help to keep the most vulnerable pupils safe. She liaises very well with families and other professionals, and is aware of her statutory duties. She has delivered training to staff and developed suitable systems for staff to report and record concerns.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Inadequate**

- Teaching, learning and assessment are inadequate because assessment information is not accurate. There is not a consistent approach to assessing what pupils across the school are capable of achieving.
- Not all teachers have accurate information about what pupils can and cannot do. Therefore they are unable to ensure that those pupils who have fallen behind are helped to catch up. Similarly, the most able are not consistently challenged to achieve their full potential.
- As a result of these weaknesses in assessment, the school is unable to provide parents with helpful information about the progress their children are making.
- This year, leaders have introduced a consistent way of planning, organising and assessing pupils' work in lessons. Teachers are working hard to follow the direction they have been given. However, they do not always understand why they are directed to employ specific approaches.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not supported well in class. The impact of teaching assistants on supporting learning is too variable because they are not deployed effectively and do not receive adequate training.
- The teaching of phonics is also too inconsistent. Stronger teaching in Reception is not built upon in key stage 1. Frequently, pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors are not corrected in subjects other than English.

Many teachers have appropriate subject knowledge to provide interest to pupils. Every class is characterised by positive relationships between adults and pupils, which has assisted pupils in being clear about teachers' expectations. Where teaching is strongest, pupils are encouraged to be resilient and reflect on their own learning.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Inadequate**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Pupils are not safe and do not feel safe because of weaknesses in safeguarding, including the management of pupils' medical needs. Leaders do not assess risks adequately and have not ensured that there are enough staff trained in first aid.
- Parents and pupils expressed concerns to inspectors about bullying. Pupils could identify different types of bullying. They described how it happens in school and how some places in the school felt less safe.
- Some pupils did not feel that adults on the playground listened when there were problems with poor behaviour or disagreements about games. One pupil had become

resigned to this unkind behaviour from a small minority of pupils and explained, 'It is life.' There are very limited records of how staff deal with bullying and behaviour concerns.

- Attendance is below the national average and falling. Far more pupils are persistently absent than found in primary schools nationally. Recent actions have led to small improvements in attendance for pupils who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, attendance for these groups remains much lower than for all pupils nationally.
- Pupils have positive attitudes about other aspects of the school. Older pupils are supportive of the school, despite the frequent changes in leadership this year.
- Pupils in all key stages are encouraged to be active and eat healthily.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils report that some of their peers engage in boisterous play at breaktimes and lunchtimes; however, pupils' behaviour in class is more positive. Staff also shared with inspectors some of the pupils' concerns about poor behaviour.
- The behaviour policy refers to guidance which is out of date. The policy is not applied consistently across the school, because staff do not fully understand it.
- Pupils are hardworking in class; they comply with instructions and are aware of the school rules. This is because teachers make their expectations clear.
- Pupils behave well when moving around the school. They have good manners and are friendly and polite to visitors.
- Children in Reception are confident and play and learn well together. Older pupils really want to succeed and are reflective about their own learning and behaviour.
- There have been recent improvements in the pride pupils take in their work. The quality of pupils' presentation is improving.

## Outcomes for pupils

### Inadequate

- Over time, pupils have underachieved. Attainment at the end of key stage 1 has been low in English and mathematics. Progress through key stage 2 has been slow, although it showed small signs of improvement in 2016. Nonetheless, attainment remained below average at the end of key stage 2 in 2016.
- There are wide gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally, especially in the early years and key stage 1. Pupil premium funding is not used effectively. There is no clear strategy to help current disadvantaged pupils to catch up with their peers. In some current year groups, disadvantaged pupils are falling further behind.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those in the speech and language units, make very slow progress from their starting points. As they move through the school they fall further behind their peers and do not achieve the

expected standards.

- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 has been consistently below the national average in recent years.
- The organisation of reading does not enable the most able to be challenged. When they reach the end of the reading scheme, pupils receive little further development or encouragement to read a wide variety of books for pleasure.
- This year, in most classes, pupils are beginning to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in English and mathematics and some other subjects. However, despite recent improvements in these areas, pupils' progress is not fast enough to help the many pupils who have fallen behind over the past few years to catch up with national expectations. Therefore, pupils are not ready for the next stage in their education.

### Early years provision

### Inadequate

- The early years provision is inadequate because safeguarding is ineffective. Welfare requirements, such as providing enough staff trained in paediatric first aid, have not been met.
- Leaders have not ensured that the staff in Nursery and Reception collaborate well. There is not a consistent approach to assessment across the early years.
- The attractive outdoor environment has the potential to promote children's physical development and safe engagement in risky play effectively. However, the way the setting is organised means children have to queue up to use the outdoor space and can only spend a short time there before it is the turn of another group. As a consequence, children cannot sustain activity or develop their learning well outside.
- Adults do not enhance children's use of language well during play. There are not enough opportunities for children to develop their skills in all areas of learning. However, the direct teaching of language and phonics is more successful.
- Children make the most pleasing progress in writing and physical development. Children develop their skills, including in phonics and number, so they are mostly well prepared for Year 1. However, disadvantaged children do far less well and there are wide gaps in achievement. Additional funding is not used in the early years to address these differences.
- There are too few opportunities for parents to contribute to their child's learning, other than through a reading journal.
- Children are confident and behave well in the early years. They follow the rules and are compliant and sensible, including when walking to the junior building for lunch.



## School details

Unique reference number	125095
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10024768

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	635
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kathryn Wyatt
Headteacher	Rob Pantling (Interim Headteacher)
Telephone number	01784 253311
Website	<a href="http://www.spelthorne.surrey.sch.uk">www.spelthorne.surrey.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:school@spelthorne.surrey.sch.uk">school@spelthorne.surrey.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	11–12 October 2012

## Information about this school

- The school is much larger than other primary schools nationally.
- The previous substantive headteacher left in September 2016. There were three different interim headteachers between October 2016 and March 2017. An interim headteacher and executive headteacher from the Howard Partnership Trust began leading the school in April 2017, two weeks before this inspection.
- The governing body has expressed its intention to formally join the Howard Partnership Trust as an academy school in the future. In the meantime, governors have agreed a memorandum of understanding with the Howard Partnership Trust for up to one year.
- There are two specially resourced units for pupils with speech, language and communication needs. These provide places for up to 10 pupils in each of key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Approximately one in five pupils is eligible for additional pupil premium funding.

- Early years provision is provided in three full-time Reception classes. There is additional provision for three-year-olds in two Nursery classes each morning and one class each afternoon.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the pupil premium, sport premium and provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school meets the current floor standards which set out the government's minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in primary schools.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in classes throughout the school, including the speech and language units. Most visits to classrooms included the opportunity to talk to pupils and look at their work. The vast majority of observations were carried out with school leaders.
- During the inspection, inspectors met regularly with the interim headteacher and executive headteacher. The director of primary education and a partnership deputy headteacher from the Howard Partnership Trust also joined some of the meetings.
- The lead inspector met separately with the chair of the governing body and the vice-chair. Inspectors had two additional telephone conversations with the chair of the governing body. The lead inspector also had a telephone conversation with a consultant representing Surrey local authority.
- Additional meetings were held with: the member of staff responsible for safeguarding; the deputy headteachers; year-group leaders; leaders responsible for English and mathematics; leaders responsible for the early years provision; a group of newly qualified teachers and a group of teaching assistants.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of school documentation, including documents related to safeguarding, attendance, governance, assessment and behaviour.
- To gain their views of the school, inspectors spoke informally with pupils in lessons and around the school, went on two tours of the school with some pupils and met two groups of pupils more formally. Inspectors also heard some pupils in Year 1, Year 3 and Year 6 read.
- In addition to speaking to parents at the start of both days of the inspection, inspectors considered 76 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, including many free-text comments. The lead inspector had two telephone conversations with parents.
- Inspectors considered 32 responses to the confidential staff survey.

## Inspection team

Lee Selby, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Phil Minns	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Jo McSherrie	Ofsted Inspector
Damian Booth	Ofsted Inspector
Cassie Buchanan	Ofsted Inspector

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