

St Helen's Primary Academy

St Helen's Way, Monk Bretton, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S71 2PS

Inspection dates

21–22 September 2017

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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- School leaders and the trust have not dealt successfully with the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Once again, the school's overall effectiveness requires improvement.
- Pupils are not making good progress in key stages 1 and 2, especially in reading and also in writing, mathematics and a range of subjects.
- Teachers are not using assessment information to plan work that matches the needs of pupils. Work set lacks challenge, particularly for the most able and middle-ability pupils.
- Teachers' expectations are not high enough. Pupils' presentation and handwriting are not good as they take too little pride in their work. Pupils' behaviour is not consistently good and there are times when it slows learning.
- Additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has not been used well. These pupils are not catching up with others quickly.
- Leaders have not been diligent in checking the quality of teaching and pupils' progress thoroughly. Professional development has not led to good teaching.
- Parents have mixed views about the school. Fewer than half would recommend the school.
- The school's website does not contain a range of information that must be published. Information about governance is incorrect.
- Over time, governors have not received sufficient information to hold leaders to account for their work.

The school has the following strengths

- New leaders have the capacity to improve the school. Signs of improvement are already showing.
- Children make good progress in early years because of good teaching and leadership. The outdoor learning environment is impressive.
- Pupils say that they are safe in school. The school is an orderly place to be.
- Leaders use the physical education and sport funding well. Pupils enjoy physical education and are active at breaktimes and lunchtimes.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in key stages 1 and 2 so that it is at least consistently good or better and leads to good outcomes for pupils by:
 - ensuring that assessment information is used to set work that challenges all groups of pupils, particularly middle-ability pupils and the most able pupils
 - skilfully questioning pupils to deepen their understanding of what is being learned
 - checking pupils' work thoroughly to make sure that misconceptions are overcome
 - providing learning opportunities that help disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to catch up with others
 - thoroughly checking pupils' understanding of what they are reading so they make at least good progress in reading
 - ensuring that teachers' expectations of pupils' handwriting, presentation and behaviour are high.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by making sure that:
 - pupils take pride in their work and present it to the highest standard
 - pupils contribute fully to their learning and behave well
 - attendance is at least average, especially for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Increase the impact of leaders, including governors, by ensuring that:
 - teaching and pupils' progress are both good or better, especially in reading, writing and mathematics
 - teachers use the school's assessment policy consistently well
 - the additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used well and results in good progress for these pupils
 - senior leaders check that all staff are clear about all safeguarding procedures
 - governors receive comprehensive information about the school's performance so they are better placed to support and challenge leaders effectively
 - the vast majority of parents have a positive view of the school and would recommend it to others
 - all school policies, and information on the school's website, meet requirements
 - teachers' professional development and the additional support from the trust lead to the overall effectiveness of the school being at least good at the next inspection
 - the trust communicates effectively with school leaders and governors.

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

Requires improvement

- Over time, there has been considerable turbulence in leadership. As a result, leaders, and the trust, have not been successful in strengthening the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. Inconsistencies in teaching, pupils' outcomes and personal development, behaviour and welfare still remain across the school. Consequently, the overall effectiveness of the school requires improvement.
- Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching has not been checked systematically. Professional development has been provided for teachers, but it has not been successful in ensuring that teaching is good, especially the teaching of reading.
- Over time, leaders have not checked on the progress of pupils well enough to make sure that it is good. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have not had their needs identified precisely and this has hampered their progress. Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has not resulted in good progress for them. The funding has not been used effectively for these groups of pupils. Leaders have much to do to ensure equality of opportunity for all.
- Parents have lost confidence in the school's leadership, with many unable to recommend the school to others. However, despite some parents continuing to have mixed views about the school, some are clear that new leaders are having a positive effect on meeting the needs of their children.
- The new headteacher has identified the shortcomings of the school very quickly and has started addressing them. For example, she has put in place a system for teachers to share good practice in school and be supported by leaders to strengthen teaching. She has sought out skilful staff and brought them to the school to start to improve teaching. She has taken decisive action to improve teaching and leadership across the school. Parents and pupils say that they recognise improvement in the school.
- Leaders have started to re-introduce performance management for teachers to check on teachers' work and hold them to account. This had lapsed over the past year. New assessment systems are being introduced to track pupils' progress.
- Over time, the subjects studied and additional planned activities have not resulted in good outcomes for pupils and good personal development, behaviour and welfare. Recently, the headteacher has employed specialist teachers of art, Spanish and physical education and work is improving in these subjects. There is a strong focus on developing reading. A new library, reading corners in classrooms and many new books are starting to interest pupils in reading. Tolerance, respect and democracy are promoted effectively in school, as is spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- The primary school physical education and sport funding is used well. Additional training for staff and the use of a specialist sports coach make physical education an enjoyable experience for pupils. Pupils are very active at lunchtimes and breaktimes.
- The work of the trust has not been effective in ensuring good leadership, teaching and

outcomes since the previous inspection. The overall effectiveness of the school has required improvement on three occasions. The trust has provided support and training for literacy and mathematics. Improvements in mathematics were evident in key stage 2 in the 2016 results, but these were not good enough in writing and reading.

- The new headteacher and governors have had to raise the trust's awareness of the poor state of the school's building. The trust is now supporting its improvement.
- The trust acted quickly to secure effective leadership soon after a report from its regional adviser identified apparent inadequacies in the school. New leadership is strengthening the school and the trust has plans to increase its support for the school.

Governance of the school

- The trust has established a new structure for the governance of all its schools. Since July 2017, a new governing body has been put in place by the trust. During this change, communication from the trust has not been sufficiently clear and timely. As a result, at the time of the inspection, leaders were unsure about who is governing the school.
- The previous governing body was diligent, challenging and keen to make sure that the school improved. Information provided to governors was not sufficiently detailed to give them an accurate view of the progress of all groups of pupils.
- Over time, not enough support has been given to governance to make sure that all policies, for example the school's complaints policy, meet requirements. Governors have not been provided with sufficient support to make sure that the school's website meets requirements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff are appropriately trained and children are safe and protected from harm. The school works effectively with external agencies and parents to protect the most vulnerable pupils. Staff have been checked appropriately to make sure that they are suitable to work with children.
- Training is provided for staff and they understand the signs they would look for in order to keep children safe. They are clear that they would report concerns or incidents to the safeguarding leaders. However, leaders have not made sure that all staff are clear about the recommended procedures for reporting allegations concerning staff.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching has been inconsistent and not good. There have been times when leaders have noted inadequacies in the past and these have been resolved. More recently, changes in leadership and staffing have started to improve the quality of teaching, but it remains variable across the school.
- Work set does not consistently challenge pupils well enough for them to make good progress. This is particularly noticeable for middle-ability pupils and the most able.

Teachers are not consistently using assessment information effectively to check on pupils' prior learning and pitch work at a level that helps pupils make good progress. When work is not appropriately challenging, the pace of learning slows, pupils' behaviour can slip and this is not managed consistently well by teachers.

- There are times when teachers use skilful questioning to probe pupils' understanding and help them to deepen their knowledge. Pupils are keen to answer and make good gains in understanding. Overall, questioning is not used well enough to engage a wide range of pupils and to provide greater depth in their learning. Consequently, pupils do not make good progress.
- The quality of pupils' work is inconsistent. Teachers are not picking up misconceptions and resolving them quickly. Pupils repeat errors and learning slows at these times. When checking pupils' books, teachers do not follow the school's assessment policy consistently.
- Teachers' expectations are variable and this leads to pupils' presentation and handwriting being inconsistent across classes and between classes. When expectations are high, pupils' work is well presented and its quality is good.
- Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their reading skills. However, pupils' understanding is not checked consistently to ensure that their comprehension skills are good.
- Teaching is improving in the school and some parents are starting to recognise this.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils are not taking enough pride in their work to ensure good progress. There are some good examples of presentation and good-quality handwriting. However, there is too much variation and pupils need to take greater pride in their work.
- Pupils say that bullying occurs and they have confidence that it is being dealt with appropriately. Records show that when bullying occurs, parents are informed and the school is taking steps to stop it. Parents' confidence is growing in the school's ability to deal with bullying effectively.
- Pupils say that they are safe in school. They have been taught well about how to stay safe, especially when using the internet.
- Pupils enjoy their time at the school's breakfast club and socialise well together. There are very effective procedures in place to make sure that pupils are kept safe. Parents are positive about the organisation of breakfast club.
- The school is a calm and orderly place. Pupils show respect for each other and for adults and visitors.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' behaviour is not consistently good in lessons. When work is not matched well to their needs, their concentration is not good. When questioning is not skilful, pupils' behaviour slips. There are times when behaviour interrupts learning and pupils confirm this.
- Attendance is below average. In the past year, the work of the school's attendance officer has helped to reduce the proportion of pupils regularly absent from school. Overall, attendance for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been well below average. Further work is to be done to make sure that they attend consistently well.
- Around school, pupils conduct themselves well and respond well to adults. The number of fixed-term exclusions reduced considerably in the summer term and is an indication of improving behaviour.
- Parents indicate a growing confidence that behaviour is getting better, although some are not yet convinced that pupils are well behaved.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils have not been making good progress across key stages 1 and 2, especially in reading and writing. The progress that pupils make in mathematics has been better in key stage 2 than key stage 1, but is still not consistently good overall. Work lacks challenge in these subjects and others, such as history and religious education, leading to progress that requires improvement.
- Published information for 2016 shows that those leaving school at the end of Year 6 made broadly average progress in reading and writing, with above-average progress in mathematics. For those leaving Year 6 in 2017, performance information indicates a slip in progress. It shows below-average progress in reading, with broadly average progress in mathematics and writing. Overall, pupils have not made good progress in the past two years. Combined attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been below average for the past two years.
- In key stage 1, pupils do not made good progress. Too few pupils are challenged well enough to reach greater depth in their learning, although there are signs of improvement.
- Disadvantaged pupils are not catching up quickly enough, especially in reading and writing. In 2016, disadvantaged pupils caught up with others in mathematics by the end of key stage 2, but they were below others in 2017. Current pupils' work shows that disadvantaged pupils are behind other pupils as the quality of teaching and support they have received has not been good.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have made less progress than others in reading. Pupils' work indicates that they are not making good progress

and teachers are not skilled in meeting the needs of these pupils. Leaders have identified the needs of these pupils more carefully than in the past, but the outcomes of this work have yet to come to fruition.

- Work is not challenging enough for the most able and for middle-ability pupils. This slows the progress they make.
- Leaders know that the quality of reading has not assisted pupils' learning. This was identified at the previous inspection. New leaders are improving facilities and resources for reading and developing a new library that is interesting pupils. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 is broadly average.
- Inspectors found improvements in the quality of the teaching of reading at this early stage in the year. However, reading has not been addressed well by previous leaders and inconsistencies remain. Pupils' reading skills are below average. Their understanding of what they are reading and higher order skills such as deduction and reasoning have yet to be developed fully.

Early years provision

Good

- Children are safe and happy because of the secure procedures that exist in early years and the good links with parents. Relationships between adults and children are warm and nurturing. Children settle quickly in school and are ready and eager to learn.
- Most children enter Nursery with skills that are below those typical for their age, particularly in communication and language. There is good support from staff to develop speaking and language skills with, when necessary, good support from external specialists.
- Children make good progress in early years. By the end of Reception, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development is above average. The proportion of disadvantaged children attaining a good level of development fluctuates over time. However, from their varying starting points, disadvantaged children make good progress.
- Over time, good leadership has led to good teaching and good outcomes for children. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together as a team. Consequently, children have wide-ranging experiences and good learning opportunities. Children are excited about learning. Questioning is good and engages children well. Occasionally, children are not challenged further to deepen their learning.
- There are many opportunities for children to read and write and explore mathematics. The outdoor learning facilities have been recently upgraded and are impressive. Teachers encourage children to make very good use of the new facilities so that good learning takes place.
- Children's interests are known well and adults design activities to meet children's needs. Children cooperate well together and with adults. They enjoy their learning and behaviour is good. Pupils are kind and considerate to each other. They are confident

and keen to show adults what they are learning.

- Parents are very positive about early years and the experiences their children are having.
- The new leader of early years has identified the right priorities to strengthen the provision further. Her main priorities are increasing the number of children exceeding the early learning goals and developing greater involvement from parents. These fit well with the findings from the inspection.
- All the appropriate welfare and safeguarding requirements are met in the provision.
- Children are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	139006
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	10036575

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	301
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Julie Price-Grimshaw
Headteacher	Jo-Anne Charalambous
Telephone number	01226 295210
Website	www.sthelensprimaryacademy.org
Email address	jcharalambous@sthelensprimaryacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	17–18 November 2015

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum, the school's complaints procedures, the effect of the pupil premium expenditure, the school's accessibility plan, the school's equality objectives and up-to-date details of its governance arrangements.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about their exclusion policy, the most recent key stage 2 results (2016), financial information and requests for paper copies of information on the website.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. The number of pupils has increased year on year for the past three years.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is above average. Almost four out of 10 pupils are disadvantaged.
- Almost all pupils are White British. Exceptionally few pupils speak English as an

additional language.

- The proportion of pupils who have support for special educational needs and/or disabilities is average.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above average.
- Children attend part time in Nursery and full time in Reception.
- The school organises a breakfast club for its pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school is sponsored by the Academies Enterprise Trust.
- There have been significant changes in staffing and leadership since the previous inspection. The deputy headteacher was appointed from 4 May 2017. Several other staff have been recently appointed to the school.
- The new headteacher is the executive headteacher of the school and also the executive headteacher of Shafton Primary Academy, another member of the Academies Enterprise Trust. She was appointed to lead St Helen's Primary Academy from 1 September 2017 after supporting the school for several months.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of teaching and learning in parts of lessons. Several sessions were jointly observed with leaders.
- Throughout the two days of the inspection, inspectors spoke with pupils, both individually and in groups, about learning and safety. They also spoke with parents.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils' work in lessons and analysed samples of work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading.
- An inspector held a meeting with the current chair of the governing body, who is also the trust's regional adviser. A meeting was held with the previous chair of the governing body and the trust's national director for primary schools.
- Inspectors also held meetings with senior leaders and other staff.
- Inspectors looked at the school's review of its own performance, its development and improvement plan, a number of key school policies and the minutes of governing body meetings. They considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors analysed 24 responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) posted during the inspection. They also considered 53 responses posted by parents in the previous academic year. Inspectors analysed five responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jim McGrath, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Collier	Ofsted Inspector
Heather Mensah	Ofsted Inspector

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Manchester
M1 2WD

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