

The John Curwen Co-operative Primary Academy

Leeds Old Road, Heckmondwike, West Yorkshire WF16 9BB

Inspection dates

10–11 January 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and managers do not have a clear plan of how to bring about the improvements needed in the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- Outcomes for nearly all groups of pupils are lower than they should be, both currently and in the recent past.
- The school has higher than average levels of pupil mobility in nearly all year groups. Pupils often arrive and leave at times other than the start of the school term. This has an impact on the standards pupils reach in national tests.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent across the school. Many staff are new to post. Teaching staff do not always know how to assess pupils' work accurately.
- Pupils and parents and carers told the inspection team that incidents of bullying happen on a regular basis and that staff are not always successful at resolving the issues underlying these incidents.
- The curriculum does not allow pupils to develop a strong enough understanding of fundamental British values or an appreciation of different faiths and cultures.
- Attendance is low. Too many pupils are regularly absent from school.
- School staff and leaders struggle to manage the difficult behaviour of a small number of pupils. As a result, these pupils are frequently excluded from school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. Leaders do not record incidents of poor behaviour effectively.

The school has the following strengths

- Children make better progress in the early years. Staff have a clear understanding of their needs and ensure that the learning experiences provided enable them to make progress.
- The majority of pupils said that they felt safe in school.
- Pupils in Year 6 made stronger progress last year, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- The school has developed a very robust system of internet safety. Staff vigilantly check where pupils look when they use the internet.

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?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons, particularly the most able
 - improving the accuracy and consistency of teachers' assessments of pupils' progress
 - closely defining the role played by educational teaching assistants (ETAs) in classrooms so that they effectively support pupils' needs
 - ensuring that feedback given to pupils is in line with the school's own policies and enables pupils to improve their work.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - developing more effective strategies to improve pupils' attendance overall and to decrease the number of pupils who are regularly absent from school
 - improving the curriculum so that pupils develop a better understanding of different faiths and cultures, particularly those represented within the school locality
 - providing pupils with a wider range of opportunities to report incidents of bullying to staff and further developing the curriculum so that pupils are clear about how to identify bullying behaviour.
- Improve outcomes for pupils by:
 - increasing the progress made by disadvantaged pupils by carefully focusing the use of pupil premium funding
 - accelerating the progress made by the most able pupils by increasing the levels of challenge in the work set for this group.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders have sufficient time to lead and manage the school
 - increasing the effectiveness of systems currently in place to monitor and improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
 - refocusing targets within the current school development plan so that they more closely match the areas in need of improvement
 - increasing the accuracy of systems in place to measure pupils' progress
 - implementing effective training to help staff to improve pupils' attendance more

rapidly

- developing stronger relationships with hard-to-reach families in order to improve pupils' attendance.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding should be carried out.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- The leadership team has a vision for the future of the school. However, the school's development plan does not accurately reflect this vision. The targets set for improvement have failed to move the school forward at a fast enough pace.
- Due to the fluctuating numbers of pupils attending the school, leaders, governors and trustees have reorganised staffing. The vice principal and the assistant vice principal now work as class teachers for four days per week, leaving just half a day per week for them to carry out their leadership roles. This has led to a lack of capacity in the leadership team and has hampered the speed of improvement overall.
- High levels of pupil mobility have further hampered the school's progress. For example, since September 2017, 80 pupils have joined the school in Year 6, currently 43 remain. Leaders have not managed this rapid turnover in pupil numbers effectively. This has contributed to the decline in outcomes seen in some year groups.
- Overall, outcomes for nearly all pupils are lower than they should be. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are poor because strategies to support more rapid improvement do not always meet their needs. Sometimes the additional strategies are not delivered because support staff are too often dealing with incidents of difficult behaviour.
- Leaders have failed to carry out checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment with sufficient rigour. As a result, the monitoring of the progress made by pupils across the school is not consistently accurate. A new system has been put in place to improve the consistency of teachers' assessment of learning. However, it is too soon to evaluate its effectiveness.
- Staff who are responsible for increasing pupils' attendance have yet to receive effective training. As a result, there is not yet a strategic plan in place to increase pupils' attendance and current strategies have not been effective at improving pupils' attendance across the school.
- Pupils' behaviour is not always as well managed as it could be. While most pupils behave well, incident reports show that the physical restraint of a small number of pupils happens regularly. Fixed-term exclusions are often the consequence of these incidents. At the time of the inspection, records showed that 59 days of exclusions had been issued to pupils since September 2017.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced overall. However, it does not prepare pupils effectively for life in modern Britain. Pupils spoken to were unaware of other faiths, including those represented within the school's local area.
- Few parents spoken to during the inspection held positive views about the school. Many felt that bullying was an issue which school leaders were not tackling as effectively as they should be. In contrast, parents of children in the early years were positive about the school and felt that staff worked hard to ensure that their children settled quickly.
- Middle leaders are beginning to develop a clear understanding of the role that they play in improving the quality of teaching and learning.

- The school has received support from the local authority during the last year. This has included support for the improvement and development of the early years unit.
- Senior leaders' use of extra funding for physical education (PE) and sports premium is effective. This has supported an increase in the number of pupils engaged in physical activity at break and lunchtime.
- It is recommended that the school does not appoint newly qualified teachers (NQTs).

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school is divided between a board of five trustees and a local governing body. The chair of governors is also a member of the board of trustees.
- Trustees are responsible for the strategic overview of the school and its financial solvency. The local governing body is responsible for ensuring that the leadership team effectively leads and manages the day-to-day running of the school.
- Both groups of governors have some understanding of the issues facing the school. Neither group has been effective in holding leaders to account with sufficient rigour. As a result, improvement has been slow.
- Minutes from governing body meetings clearly show that governors have asked a range of questions, many of which have challenged senior leaders. These challenges have not led to sufficient action for improvement in the face of low standards and inadequate teaching.
- Trustees have made efforts to support senior leaders, including brokering support from the Spenborough Co-operative Trust. However, the support offered has not brought about the change and improvement intended.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Pupils spoken to at the time of the inspection reported that bullying is a problem within the school, and this makes some of them feel unsafe. Parents reported similar issues about bullying.
- Incidents of difficult behaviour are not logged and recorded as diligently as they should be. In particular, actions taken by staff after an incident has taken place are not recorded with sufficient accuracy.
- Other safeguarding systems are securely in place. For example, all required pre-employment checks are carried out in line with legal requirements, and the single central record meets requirements.
- Senior leaders regularly attend multidisciplinary child protection meetings and work closely with colleagues from health and social care to ensure that pupils are kept safe and secure. Staff undertake regular training and are knowledgeable about current school systems.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent across the school. Many staff are new to post and do not always have a strong enough understanding of the needs of pupils. As a result, work set does not meet pupils' needs accurately, particularly the most able. Work in pupils' books reflects this.
- Teachers and ETAs do not work closely enough together. At the time of the inspection, five new ETAs had very recently been appointed. During observations in classrooms, it was clear that some were unsure of their role, and as a result support for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities was of poor quality.
- Work in pupils' books observed during the inspection was of variable quality. In some year groups, work in one class demonstrated much faster progress than that of the adjacent class of pupils from the same year group. In other year groups, poor practice meant that both classes made slow progress over time.
- Teaching staff lack the ability to assess pupils' progress accurately. As a result, pupils' progress information is not accurate in some year groups. Leaders are aware of this and have taken appropriate action to bring about improvement, including the development of a new system for recording pupils' progress from their different starting points.
- A small number of pupils find learning difficult and exhibit challenging behaviour in lessons. Staff have all received training to enable them to deal with incidents of difficult behaviour. However, school records show that on too many occasions actions used to calm pupils are not applied effectively, resulting in physical intervention being used to restrain pupils.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are often positive. Pupils spoken to commented on how teachers often made learning fun.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Pupils and parents report that incidents of bullying happen too frequently and that this reduces some pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils spoken to during the inspection explained that bullying happens both inside and outside school. Some were not clear about how to deal with it and did not always appear to understand the correct course of action to take should they be subject to bullying.
- Staff are aware that bullying does take place and feel that it is dealt with effectively through circle time. Staff also accept that more needs to be done to help pupils develop a better understanding of the different forms bullying can take and what action to take should they have concerns.
- Rewards given to pupils during assembly reflect their positive attitudes and caring behaviour. Celebration of these 'co-operative values' supports pupils' development of spiritual, moral and social values.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Pupils do not always behave well in lessons, particularly when they find learning difficult. Incidents recorded show that a small number of pupils are regularly excluded because of their very problematic behaviour, which at times puts staff and other pupils at risk of harm.
- The behaviour of these pupils does improve as they move up through school. This generally happens slowly, but can speed up with the support of outside agencies.
- Pupils' attendance is low across the school. Too many are persistently absent from school. Leaders accept that the levels of absenteeism across the school are too high. However, they have not developed strategies to improve absence figures, for example by effectively engaging parents from hard-to-reach families whose children are persistently absent.
- Some pupils are proud to be members of the school and wear their uniform with pride. They show caring attitudes to each other, staff and visitors. For example, pupils were observed holding open doors for staff and visitors.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils do not make sufficient progress from their starting points in many areas of the school.
- Many pupils arrive at times other than the start of the academic year, frequently with little or no information about their previous academic achievement. Pupils are placed in classes as soon as possible. However, gaps in pupils' learning are not always identified and this further reduces pupils' progress over time.
- Current pupil progress information shows that most-able pupils often reach expected standards. However, many do not reach the higher standards of which they are capable. This is often because teachers have low expectations of what pupils can achieve and provide work which does not challenge them sufficiently.
- The school's pupil progress information and work in pupils' books show that disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make the least progress from their starting points. Support for disadvantaged pupils does not always meet their needs and is often delivered by ETAs who can be called away to support the behavioural needs of other pupils. Governors are aware of how pupil premium funding is spent. They are not always clear about the impact of the actions taken.
- Too few pupils reach the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. A closer to average number attain the standard at the end of Year 2.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make slower than expected progress overall. The two special educational needs coordinators often struggle to engage outside agencies and this slows pupils' progress.
- Pupils often make better progress in reading and mathematics than in writing during key stages 1 and 2. This is because pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to

write across the curriculum and often feedback given is not followed up in line with the school's policy. This slows learning overall.

- Leaders recognise that pupils' progress in mathematics needs to accelerate. They have recently introduced a mathematics mastery approach that aims to address this. It was not possible to assess the impact of this strategy at the time of the inspection.
- In 2017, Year 6 pupils made better progress because of an intensive programme and effective teaching. This year, leaders hope to achieve similar results. Work in books shows that pupils are beginning to make stronger progress overall.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- A recent change to the leadership and management of early years has led to some improvement within the setting. Much of the improvement has been supported by the local authority early years team. This team is no longer supporting the setting. Early indications suggest that the leadership team is now beginning to bring about effective change itself, without support.
- Children who start in the early years make better progress from their starting points than in other areas of the school. This is because systems in place to evaluate children's starting points are more effective. However, many systems are new and it is too soon to tell whether this upward trend will be sustained.
- Children settle into the Nursery and Reception classes well. Many separate from parents calmly and enjoy the opportunities offered to play and learn.
- Teachers and other staff plan effective learning opportunities for children, particularly within the classroom. They generally identify children's needs well and work closely as a team. Opportunities for children to learn in the outside area are not as well developed. Plans are in place to improve children's learning in the outdoor environment, but these have not been fully implemented.
- Staff ensure that all statutory welfare and safeguarding requirements are met. Parents spoken to were unanimous in their praise for early years staff and felt that their children received a positive start to school life.
- Learning journeys detail individual children's progress well and reflect the improving progress now being made by many children. Over time, the school's progress information shows that too few children have reached the early learning goals in comparison to others nationally.
- Improvements to the setting are clearly beginning to have an impact on the progress made by children in the early years. Current children are becoming better prepared for Year 1 than previously.

School details

Unique reference number	141872
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10042148

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	342
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mel Woodcock
Principal	Sue Balfour-Bellamy
Telephone number	01924 326708
Website	www.johncurwen.coop
Email address	office@johncurwen.coop
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is a larger-than-average primary academy situated in Heckmondwike.
- The school has a high level of pupil mobility.
- The school converted to an academy in 2015 and became part of the Y-OUR Co-operative Academies Trust. It is also part of a soft federation with six other schools in the Spenborough Co-operative Trust.
- The school governance consists of a board of trustees and a local governing body.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club on the premises. It shares its premises with some local authority services since the closure of the on-site children's centre.
- There is a private on-site nursery and playgroup that makes provision for children up to

the age of four years. This provision is inspected separately.

- The local authority has supported the school, particularly in the development of early years provision.
- The school meets current government floor standards.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a wide range of evidence during this inspection, including through lesson observations, some of which were undertaken jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also looked at a wide range of pupils' work in every year group and across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors held meetings with school staff, including middle leaders, members of the trust, members of the local governing body and staff within the school.
- Inspectors talked both formally in meetings and informally with pupils during breaks and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors took account of the 45 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and free-text correspondence from parents.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation relating to the school's work, including the school's self-evaluation document, development plan, minutes of governing body meetings and documents relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Marian Thomas, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
James Kilner	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Heaton	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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