

# Akaal Primary School

Harrington Street, Derby, Derbyshire DE23 8PB

## Inspection dates

5–6 June 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors do not check closely enough the effectiveness of their actions to improve standards. They do not hold staff sufficiently to account for pupils' progress.
- Middle leaders are not as effective as they could be in bringing about improvements. Their plans for improvement, including for the early years, are not sufficiently focused.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. Work is not routinely matched to pupils' needs. Too many pupils do not make the progress or attain as highly as they should, particularly in writing.
- Leaders have not ensured that assessment is consistently accurate. As a result, their analysis of the school's performance and their targets for improvement are not as accurate as they could be.
- The governing body does not hold leaders to account for the impact of additional funding.
- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of what pupils, including the most able, can achieve or the quality and presentation of pupils' work in different subjects.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' use of accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation in their writing are not consistently high. As a result, pupils' progress in writing is not as rapid as it should be.
- Teachers do not quickly tackle pupils' errors and misconceptions. They do not consistently teach pupils how to effectively edit and improve their work.
- Teachers and other staff do not teach pupils to use and apply their phonics and early reading skills sufficiently well. Nor do they consistently promote pupils' understanding and use of important vocabulary.

### The school has the following strengths

- Relationships are positive. The school has a caring ethos of mutual respect. Pupils understand the school values.
- The curriculum prepares pupils for life in modern Britain and promotes their personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Leaders are forward looking. Standards are beginning to improve, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils' manners are impeccable. Pupils behave and conduct themselves very well.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:
  - they hold staff to account effectively to ensure that they follow agreed approaches to school improvement consistently
  - assessments of pupils' learning are accurate
  - they further develop the role of middle leaders so that their plans for improvement are sharply focused and they are more effective in improving pupils' attainment and progress in their areas of responsibility, including in the early years
  - the governing body holds leaders effectively to account for the impact of additional funding including the pupil premium, funding provided for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, and the primary physical education (PE) and sport funding, to ensure that these have the maximum impact on improving pupils' outcomes.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make more rapid progress by ensuring that all teachers:
  - match work accurately to pupils' needs and have consistently high expectations of what all pupils, including the most able, can achieve
  - quickly tackle pupils' errors and misconceptions
  - teach pupils to more effectively and accurately apply their phonics and early reading skills to improve the quality of their writing
  - promote pupils' understanding and use of specific vocabulary in different subjects
  - teach pupils how to edit and improve their work and use accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation appropriate to their ability
  - have consistently high expectations of the quality and presentation of pupils' work in all subjects.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management should be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The headteacher has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas needing improvement. Leaders have introduced a range of actions to improve standards. These include new approaches to the teaching of mathematics, a review of the school's phonics programme, the 'word study' initiative to improve spelling, and reading sessions to promote pupils' comprehension skills. However, leaders are not rigorous enough in checking that these approaches are applied consistently and effectively. As a result, the pace of improvements has not been quick enough.
- Middle and subject leaders are committed to the school's values. The headteacher has ensured that they have received training to develop their roles. They check standards, develop school policies and lead developments of the curriculum in different subjects. There is some evidence of the positive impact of their work to improve standards. However, much of this is at an early stage. They have not ensured that their plans and initiatives are linked well enough to pupils' progress to help drive more rapid improvements.
- The headteacher has established systems for managing the performance of staff and meets regularly with staff to review the progress made by pupils. However, these reviews are sometimes not linked as sharply as they could be to pupils' outcomes to effectively hold staff to account.
- Leaders have not ensured that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good. Consequently, the quality of pupils' work and the progress they make is too variable in different classes and subjects. Too many pupils do not make the progress or attain as highly as they should, particularly in writing.
- Leaders have not ensured that assessment is accurate. As a result, leaders' and the governing body's understanding of the progress and attainment of different groups of pupils in different classes and subjects and the targets set for improvement are not always accurate.
- Leaders have not ensured that the pupil premium funding is used effectively. Plans are not fit for purpose. They do not sharply focus on improving pupils' outcomes. Leaders cannot be sure that the funding is having the maximum impact on accelerating pupils' progress. Governors are therefore unable to hold leaders to account for its use.
- Similarly, leaders and governors cannot be sure that the primary PE and sport funding is being used effectively. Again, leaders' plans do not have sharp, measurable outcomes to ensure that the funding is having the maximum impact it should. Leaders have not reviewed the impact of the funding on, for example, increasing participation rates of pupils throughout the school or improving the quality of teaching.
- The new coordinator of the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is strengthening school systems for identifying these pupils' needs and putting into place appropriate support and provision. However, the coordinator recognises that leaders do not have a sharp overview of the impact of teaching and support for these pupils. The plan to improve the provision is not related to improving outcomes for pupils. Individual pupils are making positive progress. However, leaders and governors cannot

be sure that additional funding to support these pupils is having the maximum impact.

- The school works with a teaching school to support aspects of staff development. The 'professional partner' also provides support, advice and guidance to develop leadership skills. The headteacher is positive about this support. However, this support has not been as effective as it could be in ensuring that leaders have the skills they need to secure accountability and drive more rapid improvement.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. Staff ensure that the school's thematic curriculum is complemented by enrichment activities such as the pupils' recent visit to Manchester airport. Parents and carers spoke positively of how end-of-topic events such as the 'farm shop' or 'construction site' gave them the opportunity to visit the school and share in their child's learning. Leaders and other staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- The very large majority of parents and carers who spoke with the inspector or who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, were positive about the school. They commented on the friendly, welcoming ethos of the school and the high expectations of behaviour. They said that their children are happy and enjoy school.

## **Governance of the school**

- The governing body is committed to the school's values and positive ethos. Members of the governing body have a wide range of experience. Governors have a secure overview of the school's strengths and areas in which it needs to improve. The headteacher's reports provide the governing body with comprehensive information about the school's performance. The governing body is knowledgeable about the school's actions and initiatives to improve standards. Governors are committed to developing the effectiveness of their role.
- Governors regularly visit the school to deepen their understanding of the school's work, for example, in relation to safeguarding, homework, teaching and learning. The minutes of their meetings show that they are increasingly able to challenge and hold leaders to account for many aspects of the school's performance.
- The governing body does not hold leaders to account for the school's use of the pupil premium funding, the funding to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and the primary PE and sport funding.
- The governing body has not ensured that the school has met the government's recommendations about what academies should publish on the school website.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a culture of safeguarding and care. Leaders act on any concerns about pupils' welfare rapidly. They involve external agencies when necessary and are tenacious in following up referrals.
- Leaders ensure that statutory requirements are met. The record of recruitment checks on staff, governors and visitors is thorough. The governing body is mindful of its

responsibility to check that arrangements to safeguard pupils are in place.

- Pupils said that they feel safe and all parents who spoke with the inspector said that their children are safe. Pupils said that bullying is very rare and they are confident that adults will rapidly resolve any concerns they have.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high enough.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' learning is not consistently accurate. Sometimes, teachers do not match work well to pupils' needs. Teachers do not tackle pupils' errors and misconceptions quickly enough. As a result, too many pupils, including the most able, do not make the rapid progress they should.
- Pupils sometimes write at length. However, pupils' progress is not as rapid as it could be because teachers do not consistently challenge them to use accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation appropriate to their ability. Teachers do not consistently teach pupils how to edit and improve their work. The quality of pupils' writing in their topic work is often lower than in their English books.
- Teachers do not focus clearly enough on promoting pupils' understanding and use of important vocabulary in different subjects.
- Staff promote positive attitudes to reading. However, teachers and staff are not equally skilled or rigorous in reinforcing and consolidating pupils' understanding of phonics in English and other subjects. Staff sometimes do not ensure that pupils can apply their phonics and early reading skills in their writing.
- Teachers often use visual imagery and physical apparatus well to support pupils' learning in mathematics. Some teachers provide increasingly effective opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills. However, this is not consistent. In some classes, there is little of this work. As a result, some pupils do not progress to gain a deeper understanding.
- Some teaching assistants provide effective support, particularly when working with small groups. However, the effectiveness of teaching assistants is also inconsistent. Sometimes, teachers do not deploy teaching assistants carefully enough to ensure that they can have the maximum impact on pupils' learning and progress.
- Teachers ensure that pupils engage in 'word study' work, to develop pupils' understanding of spelling patterns and rules. This work is beginning to have a positive impact. However, teachers do not consistently teach pupils to apply their understanding effectively in their independent writing.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and relationships are positive. Teachers often use their sound subject knowledge to ask questions to check pupils' understanding or develop their thinking. Teachers ensure that classrooms are calm and purposeful places in which to learn. Routines are in place and learning is generally well organised.
- Teachers set homework in line with the school's policy and as appropriate for the age and learning stage of pupils. This consolidates learning and prepares pupils well for

work to come. Parents commented positively on the homework provided.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are sociable and confident. Staff teach pupils to understand the importance of making responsible choices. This is reinforced by the pupil 'values ambassadors' who remind pupils of what is expected. Pupils understand and 'live' the school values. A pupil in Year 3 said, 'This school is only for nice, happy people. If you don't show love – one of our values – why would you come to this school?' Pupils are kind to, and respectful of, each other and adults.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. A pupil explained to the inspector how the 'prepare for take-off' topic was not only to learn about aeroplanes and flight, but also to 'prepare your mind and start learning'. Pupils concentrate and try hard to complete all that is asked of them in lessons.
- Pupils said that they are safe and incidents of bullying are very rare. Leaders' records show that any concerns raised are tackled rapidly. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. Leaders are aware of the need to further develop pupils' understanding of internet safety.
- Pupils are proud of their school and their appearance. However, teachers do not teach pupils to consistently take pride in their work.
- When teaching does not meet pupils' needs, some pupils lose concentration.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and courteous and have impeccable manners. Their conduct in classrooms, corridors and the playground is good.
- Pupils support and encourage each other. They have a good understanding of school systems to support their behaviour. Parents who spoke with the inspector were unanimous in their view that the school ensures that pupils are well behaved.
- Attendance is improving but remains below the national average. Leaders have shared high expectations of pupils' attendance with parents. They check attendance carefully and work with the families of pupils who have persistent absence. They have secured the involvement of an educational welfare officer. Leaders and the governing body recognise that improving attendance is an ongoing area of focus.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Requires improvement**

- At the end of key stage 1 in 2017, the proportions of pupils achieving the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics were close to the national averages. The proportions achieving at greater depth were above the national averages. However, current pupils' work across the school shows that the progress that

pupils make is inconsistent.

- Too many pupils do not make the progress they should, particularly in writing. While there is evidence of some improvement, this is not rapid enough or sufficiently secure. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, the most able, those who speak English as an additional language and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, are capable of more.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2017 was lower than the national average and lower than the previous year. Recent changes to the approach to teaching phonics are beginning to bring about improvements, and current pupils are making more rapid progress than in the past. However, pupils do not routinely apply their phonics skills accurately in their writing.
- The quality of pupils' writing is often let down by poor grammar, punctuation and spelling. Teachers do not consistently guide and teach pupils how to edit and improve their work. This slows the progress they make. The quality of pupils' writing in other subjects is often not as high as it is their English books.
- Pupils' work shows that disadvantaged pupils are making progress which is similar to that of other pupils. The progress of these pupils is inconsistent, and, in common with pupils who are not disadvantaged, some pupils do not make the progress they should, particularly in writing.
- Overall, pupils make stronger progress in mathematics. However, their progress in calculation or developing their problem-solving and reasoning skills is inconsistent.
- Standards of handwriting and presentation are inconsistent.

### Early years provision

### Requires improvement

- Leadership of the early years is not as effective as it could be in securing further improvements. Leaders do not effectively analyse strengths and weaknesses and the specific actions needed to improve the provision. They do not effectively scrutinise information about children's progress to create plans that set sharp targets to accelerate the progress of different groups of children in different areas of learning. The leader of the early years has not received sufficient training in this aspect of early years provision.
- Staff regularly assess carefully individual children's learning. The leader for the early years has ensured that activities provide opportunities in the different areas of learning. However, planned activities sometimes do not offer children sufficient challenge. As a result, some children, including the most able, sometimes do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. For example, staff do not consistently and effectively reinforce children's phonics skills appropriate to children's abilities when interacting with the children. This means that sometimes children do not make the progress they could in improving their reading and writing skills.
- Parents who spoke with the inspector were positive about the start their children have

made in the early years. The leader for the early years is beginning to secure parents' contributions to assessments of children's learning and progress. The leader of the early years has identified this as an area for further development.

- The school's on-entry assessment information shows that most children enter the early years with skills that are close to those typical for their age. Published information shows that the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development has been higher than the national average for the last two years and improved in 2017. The majority of children make secure progress in the early years.
- Children communicate and cooperate well. They show perseverance and concentration. This was observed when some children applied themselves to their writing work. As part of work linked to the class book, 'The Lighthouse Keeper', children also showed perseverance in trying to find the right key that fitted a lock.
- Staff have established effective routines for children. Children have positive relationships with each other and follow instructions given to them by adults. Children behave well in the early years. They usually have a positive 'can do' attitude to their learning. One child said, 'I'm strong. I can pick up this tyre!'
- Leaders ensure that the safeguarding arrangements in the early years are met.

## School details

Unique reference number	142109
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10048112

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	99
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Daljit Singh Virk
Headteacher	Julie Fellowes
Telephone number	01332 499011
Website	<a href="http://www.akaalprimaryschool.org">www.akaalprimaryschool.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:j.fellowes@akaalprimaryschool.org">j.fellowes@akaalprimaryschool.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school opened in September 2015. The current headteacher was appointed to the post of substantive headteacher in September 2017. Prior to this, she had been the head of school.
- Akaal Primary School is currently smaller than an average-sized primary school. In September 2017, it expanded to include a Year 3 class. The school will continue to add a new year group each year. The school plans to move to a new site in September 2018.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and of pupils who speak English as an additional language, are above those seen nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the school professional partner, subject leaders, the leader for the early years and the coordinator for the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. The inspector met with members of the governing body and spoke with a representative of the department for education. Discussions explored a wide range of subjects, including safeguarding arrangements.
- The inspector observed four lessons and five phonics sessions with the headteacher. The inspector scrutinised pupils' work with subject leaders and in lessons, and spoke with pupils to evaluate the quality of their learning. The inspector met with a group of pupils and listened to pupils read. A range of documents was scrutinised, relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, pupils' attainment and progress, and staff performance. The inspector looked at plans for improvement as well as leaders' evaluation of the school's performance. The inspector also considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.
- The inspector spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day. Account was taken of the 36 responses to Parent View and free text responses, as well as the 10 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.

## Inspection team

John Lawson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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