

Armley Primary School

Salisbury Terrace, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS12 2AY

Inspection dates

27–28 February 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- The quality of education pupils receive has deteriorated significantly since the last inspection in 2014. Although urgent remedial work has started recently, the school's overall effectiveness is inadequate.
- The school is overly reliant on external support. There is only very limited capacity from within the school to secure the significant improvements required to ensure that pupils' outcomes improve.
- Teachers do not assess pupils' learning effectively or have a thorough understanding of pupils' starting points or additional needs. Lessons are often undemanding and do not meet the needs of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Pupils' attendance has improved markedly in the last few months. However, pupils' poor attendance over time continues to have a negative impact on their learning as they endeavour to catch up.
- The curriculum does not cover the full range of national curriculum subjects in enough depth. Pupils rarely have the opportunity to learn new knowledge or develop their understanding of subjects such as geography and history. Provision for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is limited.
- Governance is weak. Over time, governors have not held leaders to account or fulfilled their statutory duties well enough.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around school has improved recently. However, a small minority of pupils continue to display poor attitudes to learning.
- Pupils are not well prepared for the next stage of their education. In 2018, the progress made by Year 6 pupils placed the school in the bottom 10% of schools nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.

The school has the following strengths

- The interim headteacher and supporting headteacher from another school provide purposeful leadership. Together they are beginning to address the many shortfalls in the school's performance.
- Children in Reception are making stronger progress than in the Nursery and key stages 1 and 2. Teaching here is focused and effective assessment ensures that teachers in Reception plan effectively to meet children's needs.

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 address the weaknesses in leadership and governance by:
 - increasing the capacity and effectiveness of school leaders so that the school is not reliant on external support
 - ensuring that governors access appropriate training, fulfil their statutory duties and hold leaders to account stringently for their work
 - appraising regularly the performance of staff and ensure that they are effectively supported to improve their practice
 - implementing effective school systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning, in addition to pupils' attainment and progress
 - devising a strategic plan that identifies the barriers to learning disadvantaged pupils face and allocating additional government funding appropriately to help them attain well and make at least good progress
 - refining the curriculum to ensure that pupils learn new skills and develop their knowledge and understanding across the full range of national curriculum subjects.
- Improve teaching so that progress rapidly improves for all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, by ensuring that teachers, together with leaders:
 - develop an awareness of pupils' starting points so that they can plan to meet their needs effectively
 - increase their expectations of what the most able pupils can do
 - plan learning activities that match the intended learning outcomes
 - make sure that the work pupils complete deepens their understanding and builds on their prior knowledge
 - support the development of pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar
 - improve the effectiveness of teaching assistants
 - insist on the highest standards of pupils' behaviour in lessons
 - refine the use of questioning to assess pupils' understanding more accurately.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - continuing to increase pupils' attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism
 - building on the recent work to improve pupils' behaviour so that all pupils adhere to the higher standards expected of them recently

- improving the design and teaching of the PSHE education curriculum
- making sure that pupils understand how to be a successful learner.
- Improve early years provision in the Nursery so that it emulates more recent developments in Reception.

External reviews of governance and of the use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders have been unable to stem a significant decline in all aspects of the school's work since the last inspection. It is only recently that those responsible for governance and the local authority have begun to act with sufficient urgency to improve leadership and the quality of education that pupils receive.
- At present, the school is heavily dependent upon external support. An interim headteacher, ably supported by an effective leader from a local primary school, is leading the school due to the absence of the headteacher. Together, these temporary leaders are bringing much-needed consistency and a clear strategic vision to the school. However, there is only very limited capacity from within the school to bring about further improvements.
- Pupils do not experience a sufficiently broad and balanced curriculum. For example, key stage 1 and key stage 2 pupils rarely spend time learning the foundation subjects such as geography, history, music, design and technology or languages. Many pupils leave Year 6 unprepared to meet the demands of secondary school.
- Until recently, leaders and governors did not hold staff to account appropriately or with sufficient rigour. Systems to manage the performance of staff were weak or non-existent. Consequently, leaders tolerated poor teaching and pupils continued to make increasingly weaker progress over time. The interim headteacher has started to improve matters in this regard; staff now know what is expected from them and how they will be held accountable over time. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved since his arrival.
- Leaders and governors do not ensure that they use additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND effectively. Leaders do not allocate funding routinely or in a strategic and coordinated manner. Disadvantaged pupils' progress and attendance is below other pupils nationally and pupils with SEND do not attain well or reach the standards they are capable of.
- Procedures to assess pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are beginning to improve but have not been fit for purpose over time. Historically, teachers did not have an assessment policy to follow and leaders did not ensure that teachers assessed pupils in the same way. As a result, teachers have been unable to identify pupils who require support or intervention and these pupils have fallen further behind. Although there is still much work to do, leaders have recently introduced formal assessments in English and mathematics. Teachers now have a stronger understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and offer pupils personalised support with literacy and numeracy when required.
- Since their arrival in November and December 2018 respectively, the supporting headteacher and interim headteacher, together with a new school improvement partner from the local authority, have introduced a wide range of basic school systems and procedures. New leaders have approached this task with gusto and in a measured way so that they guard against what they describe as 'change fatigue'. Most staff say that the school is well led now and that leaders support them effectively to manage pupils' behaviour. However, it is too early to see the effect of leaders' recent work on

pupils' learning and progress.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is appropriately supported. This has been helped by the introduction of a new school 'respect' motto developed by pupils and staff. Pupils are given daily opportunities to reflect when reciting the school prayer in assembly or sharing ideas and opinions with their peers during circle time in class.
- The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- Governance is weak. Since the last inspection, those with responsibility for governance have not held leaders to account for the school's performance or fulfilled their statutory duties effectively.
- Over time, governors have had limited training. They have not had sufficient understanding of published attainment and progress data for pupils. Consequently, they have not asked searching questions of leaders relating to the sharp decline in pupils' outcomes.
- Governors have not challenged leaders regarding their lack of engagement with other learning communities or the extent to which external support has been used effectively to improve the school's work.
- More recent appointments to the governing body are providing a wider range of expertise, knowledge and strategic leadership skills. New governors are objective and are evaluating the school with a 'fresh pair of eyes'. Minutes of the 'joint review group' demonstrate that governors are less accepting of the information they receive now than they have been previously.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have taken action recently to ensure that all pressing site matters are resolved that could have resulted in an injury to pupils. For example, holes in the perimeter fence have been repaired and access to the school roof has been removed.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and that they know who to speak to if something is worrying them. Pupils can communicate concerns to an adult during daily group activities.
- Staff know and understand the signs which may indicate that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or harm. Leaders have created successful partnerships with professionals and outside agencies that ensure that pupils are supported effectively. Staff attend frequent safeguarding training and leaders provide regular updates in weekly briefings.
- Staff have a thorough awareness of the dangers pupils may face in the locality. This ensures that staff are able to identify pupils who may be at risk of radicalisation and know what to do to support them. However, from discussions with pupils during the inspection, their understanding of radicalisation and extremism appears

underdeveloped.

- Leaders make appropriate checks to ensure that staff are safe to work with pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Over time, weak leadership, inconsistent staffing and a lack of accountability has contributed to inadequate teaching, learning and assessment. Consequently, pupils' progress across the school is extremely poor.
- The lack of formal systems to assess pupils' learning for many years has meant that teachers do not have a sufficiently detailed understanding of what pupils know, understand and can do.
- Teachers' planning does not meet the needs of all pupils, particularly the most able. In lessons, the activities many pupils are given are too difficult for them due to substantial gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Teachers do not always recognise that the most able pupils are capable of much more. Time is wasted when these pupils wait for their peers to complete their work before the teacher distributes more challenging tasks. The most able pupils do not attain well or make the progress they should.
- Sometimes, the activities teachers ask pupils to complete have no relevance to the intended learning outcomes. For example, in one class, pupils were observed colouring in when they were meant to be learning new vocabulary. In another, pupils spent most of the lesson 'cutting and sticking' rather than learning the benefits of healthy eating, as planned. In this way, pupils are often busy, but seldom learning.
- Sequences of lessons lack coherence. Scrutiny of pupils' work demonstrates that the lack of a structured curriculum within and between subjects results in pupils learning new concepts and content in isolation, rarely deepening their understanding before they move onto something new.
- Low expectations are common. Pupils are content to present teachers with poor-quality work because teachers do not always insist on high standards. Pupils' written work contains frequent errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar that are rarely highlighted by teachers.
- The quality of adult support in lessons is variable. In some instances, teaching assistants lack the required subject knowledge to be able to identify pupils' errors and misconceptions. In other cases, teaching assistants work well with pupils who sometimes display challenging behaviour, because they have developed strong working relationships with each other.
- Teachers' questioning is often not effective as it does not probe pupils' understanding or help them to improve. Sometimes, teachers model subject-specific vocabulary when asking questions. However, because pupils' vocabulary is limited, and teachers do not explain the meaning of new words routinely, pupils become confused and are reluctant to volunteer an answer in class. For example, in a key stage 2 class, pupils were unable to answer the teacher's questions relating to the multiplication of fractions because they did not understand the term 'denominator', which the teacher used frequently.
- More recently introduced approaches to teaching, learning and assessment are beginning to have a positive effect when used consistently across the school. For

example, leaders now insist that teachers assess pupils' understanding of literacy and numeracy during each day and provide prompt support for those pupils who need it. Teachers like this change, and believe it helps pupils to stay in touch with their learning rather than falling further behind.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- The PSHE curriculum is not sufficiently well planned or sequenced to develop pupils' knowledge for future learning. Pupils do learn some PSHE content but in an ad-hoc way, when opportunities arise or time allows. As a result, pupils' understanding linked to topics such as diet and health-related learning is less developed.
- A legacy of weaker teaching over time, coupled with low expectations, has resulted in many pupils not knowing how to be a successful learner. Some pupils lack confidence and, despite being unable to complete their work, will shy away from asking for help.
- Pupils say that bullying does occur. The school's own information, tracked via new electronic software, highlights that incidents of bullying are infrequent. Pupils are confident that should they or a friend experience bullying, the staff in school will deal with it swiftly and appropriately.
- Staff work well with vulnerable pupils and their families to ensure that they receive effective support with social, emotional and mental health issues. Recently, staff have started to work more closely with health-care professionals in the local area. Through partnership and individual intervention sessions, pupils who urgently need additional support to help them learn respond well to the personalised care that they receive.
- A number of individual projects, visits and visiting speakers relating to drugs education, road safety, e-safety and positive relationships to safeguard against domestic violence ensure that pupils are familiar with localised risks and how to mitigate against them.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Teachers say that, until very recently, they were unable to focus on teaching because they were often dealing with unruly pupil behaviour. To tackle this, leaders introduced a new behaviour policy in December 2018, increasing the expectations for pupils' behaviour. This has resulted in a rise in the proportion of pupils who are excluded for a fixed period, but behaviour in and around school is much improved. However, a small minority of pupils continue to display weaker attitudes to their learning that disrupt their learning and that of others.
- Overall, school absence figures have been slightly higher than the national average since 2016. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is also higher than the national average. Published information shows that disadvantaged pupils' attendance is below other pupils nationally. However, the school's own information demonstrates

that pupils' attendance has improved sharply since the arrival of the interim headteacher. This is partly because leaders now promote the benefits of good attendance during school assemblies. Furthermore, the class with the best attendance each week receives a reward; pupils participate with enthusiasm in the weekly attendance assemblies, eager to learn if they have contributed to the winning class.

- The attendance of the very small number of pupils at both alternative education providers is high. This is because these pupils receive effective and personalised support to ensure that they can access the curriculum. Communication between the alternative education providers, school and parents is strong. This ensures that decisions regarding these pupils' next steps are coordinated and taken in the best interests of each pupil.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Weaknesses in leadership and teaching over time have resulted in pupils making poor progress. Too many pupils are working at standards well below those expected for their age.
- Between 2016 and 2018, pupils' progress across key stage 2 in reading and writing declined from well above the national average to well below. In 2018, Year 6 pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics placed the school in the bottom 10% of schools nationally.
- Pupils do not get off to a good start in key stage 1. A higher than average proportion of pupils do not reach the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 and again at the end of Year 2. These pupils do not receive the support they need to help them become confident and fluent readers. Consequently, as they grow older, the weakest readers fall further behind their peers, attaining poorly throughout school.
- Despite a marginal improvement in 2018, pupils' results in the reading, writing and mathematics assessments at the end of key stage 1 have been well below the national average historically. Very few pupils have attained the expected standard at greater depth in reading and mathematics for the last three years. There have been no pupils who have attained the expected standard at greater depth in writing during this time.
- Weak teacher planning and ineffective use of additional government funding has a detrimental effect on the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. These vulnerable pupils make the least progress across the school. School systems to identify and support pupils with SEND are starting to improve with the appointment of a new special educational needs coordinator in January 2019. Some pupils with SEND improve their social and emotional skills when they work in small intervention groups or on a one-to-one basis with teaching assistants.
- Pupils are not well prepared to meet the demands of secondary school. By the time they leave Year 6, most pupils have considerable ground to make up in terms of their basic literacy and numeracy development. Similarly, and because the curriculum is not fit for purpose, pupils do not acquire knowledge, understanding and skills across a broad range of subjects, particularly in the humanities, languages, technology and the arts.

- The school's new assessment system is in its infancy. Early indications suggest that higher expectations and stronger teaching are beginning to improve the progress pupils make, particularly in Year 6. It is early days in this regard and leaders know that more recent improvements must be sustained to compensate for a legacy of underachievement.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Over time, the proportion of children who leave Reception having reached a good level of development has been weak. In 2018, only one in four children reached the expected level of development. However, children currently in Reception are making stronger progress. Scrutiny of children's work and records of their learning demonstrate that a larger proportion of children than in the past are on track to meet the early learning goals in reading and writing. This is as a result of improved teaching in the early years.
- The early years leader also teaches in the Reception class. She has worked closely with leaders since December 2018 to introduce and utilise new ways of assessing and tracking children's development. This has ensured that leaders and staff are now aware of what children can and can't do well. Reception children now receive appropriate tasks and are directed to play in areas that help them to overcome specific barriers to their learning. These new systems are not fully in place in the Nursery. Nursery staff are not as responsive to children's needs or as proactive in taking opportunities to direct children to learning activities that will help them the most.
- School leaders know the importance of children getting off to a good start in the early years. In this way, they have invested a significant amount of time supporting the early years leader so that the quality of teaching in the early years improves. Planning is now more focused on the needs of the children and outdoor provision is giving children more frequent opportunities for literacy and physical development.
- Children develop appropriate relationships. They work happily on their own and with other children or staff during adult-led games and activities. Children are not easily distracted because teachers have developed effective routines and provide varying stimuli across the day and week.
- The early years environment is brimming with a wide range of play-based learning that challenges children to share, make marks, count and ask questions. At the time of the inspection, the Reception class were eagerly waiting for nine baby chicks to hatch. Children frequently paused their play to peer into the incubator and ask questions of the adults nearby. The early years leader grasped the opportunity to use the hatching of the chicks as a teaching point; counting with the children the number of 'boys' and 'girls' as she transferred the chicks into the brooder.
- Children have developed an age-appropriate understanding of health and safety. For example, one boy reminded his friends to 'wash their hands' if they touch a baby chick to wash away any germs.
- Staff place a significant emphasis on communication and language development. They insist on high expectations when children speak and correct the use of colloquial speech when overheard.

- Communication with parents is improving. This is helping to develop teaching 'partnerships' so that staff and parents work together to share information such as development milestones or pastoral matters.
- All of the early years welfare requirements are met. However, leaders acknowledge that further work is needed to refine the intimate care policy to ensure that it is relevant to the school and understood in full by all staff.

School details

Unique reference number	107960
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10054362

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jon Hosegood
Headteacher	Lindsey Callaghan (Headteacher) James Clay (Interim Headteacher)
Telephone number	01132 639216
Website	www.armley-pri.leeds.sch.uk
Email address	sheard.lorna@armleyprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 March 2018

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The interim headteacher was appointed in December 2018. He is supported for two days each week by the headteacher from Swarcliffe Primary School, Leeds.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support through the pupil premium funding is significantly higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The school is in the top 20% of all schools for the proportion of pupils in attendance with SEND.
- The school uses ABC at Summerfield Primary and Oasis at Swinnow Primary as alternative education providers for three pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes across the school, observing teachers more than once. Many of the observations in lessons were carried out jointly with the interim headteacher and early years leader.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, teachers and members of the governing body, including the vice-chair of governors. The lead inspector met with the new school improvement advisor from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work during lessons and with senior leaders in all subjects. In addition, an inspector scrutinised a large sample of learning journals belonging to children in Nursery and Reception.
- An inspector spoke on the telephone with the local authority designated officer and with representatives from the alternative education providers.
- Inspectors held informal and formal discussions with many pupils and observed interactions during social times.
- Inspectors listened to a group of pupils read.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and scrutinised a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation, analysis of performance information, action plans and evaluations, attendance records, safeguarding files, recruitment checks and minutes of governors' meetings.
- Inspectors took into account the 18 responses from parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Inspectors also considered the responses from the 18 members of staff who completed Ofsted's online staff survey.
- There were no responses from pupils to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's 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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