

Sarratt Church of England Primary School

The Green, Sarratt, Rickmansworth, WD3 6AS

Inspection dates 21–22 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- The headteacher and school leaders have not done enough to tackle weaknesses in pupils' achievement or the quality of teaching. They have not ensured that formal procedures for managing staff performance are in place.
- Senior leaders have seen standards fall since the last inspection without taking steps to prevent this. Too many pupils underachieve, including the most able.
- The quality of teaching is much too variable. Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what their pupils can achieve.
- Although standards are broadly in line with national figures, pupils underachieve because they make inconsistent progress in developing skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching assistants do not promote and improve pupils' learning effectively.
- Governors have presided over the school's decline. They have not held the headteacher to account, have not communicated effectively with parents and have failed to act on support and advice from the local authority.
- In some classes pupils are restless and disengaged, either because they have not understood the activity, or because they do not have the skills or knowledge required to complete it. This leads to valuable learning time being lost.
- The school is failing to meet its statutory duties regarding the safety of its pupils. Not all staff have up-to-date training on how to keep pupils safe. First Aid training does not meet the appropriate requirements.
- Until recently senior leaders had not checked the quality of provision, or kept a close enough eye on how additional funding has been used, and its impact on pupils.
- Parents have lost confidence in the school. They have well-founded concerns about the quality of leadership, including governance.

The school has the following strengths

- The interim headteacher has quickly established the priorities for the school and has already secured some improvements in teaching.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the school's newly devised curriculum. Pupils develop new skills both within school time and during extra activities, such as music lessons.

Information about this inspection

The inspection was carried out in response to seven complaints made to Ofsted which raised serious concerns. The complaints were deemed to qualify under legislation and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector decided that an unannounced inspection of the school should take place to follow up the whole-school issues that were raised.

- Inspectors observed parts of 12 lessons, some of which were joint observations with the interim headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at samples of work, listened to groups of pupils read in Years 1, 2 and 6, and held discussions with pupils about their learning and experience of school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the interim headteacher, senior and middle leaders, teachers, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, the school improvement partner and the Chair of the Interim Action Group.
- Inspectors held a meeting with over 100 parents. There were not enough responses on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, to draw conclusions from them.
- Policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils were checked.

Inspection team

Samantha Stewart, Lead inspector

Seconded Inspector

Marion Lloyd

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with 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.

Information about this school

- Sarratt Church of England Primary School is smaller than average with 169 pupils taught in mixed ability classes.
- Virtually all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below the national level. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium (which in this school provides additional funding for those children who are eligible for free school meals) is below the national average.
- There are no children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The interim headteacher has been in-post since September 2014.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Delegated powers were withdrawn from the school by the local authority in July 2014. The school currently has an Interim Action Group which oversees finance and human resources. The local authority applied for consent to set up an Interim Executive Board (IEB) in October 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what all pupils can achieve and providing greater challenge, particularly for the most-able pupils
 - giving clear and precise explanations to pupils
 - ensuring that all teachers use assessment and their prior knowledge of what pupils can do to accurately plan their next steps in learning
 - give consistent and useful feedback to pupils so they know how to improve their work.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels, including subject leaders, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers with responsibilities for specific areas of the school's work, particularly English and mathematics, are given training so that they can monitor the quality of teaching and achievement in their areas or subjects and lead them effectively
 - ensuring that systems for monitoring teachers' performance are implemented and that regular checks are made on the quality of teaching and achievement, so that action can be taken quickly to rectify any areas of weakness
 - making sure that parents are given timely information about their child's progress and they are regularly informed about events in school
 - making certain that the use of any additional funding, particularly for sport, is closely tracked for how well it is improving outcomes for all pupils.
- Improve the effectiveness of the governing body by:
 - developing the strategic leadership of governors
 - ensuring that governors hold school leaders to account for the continual improvement in standards
 - making sure that governors communicate effectively, so that parents know who they are and what role

governors play.

- Improve behaviour and safety so it is consistently good at all times by:
 - making sure that pupils develop good learning habits, so that time in lessons is not wasted
 - making sure that all staff have appropriate training, including for First Aid, to ensure the safety of pupils.

The school may not appoint any newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- The substantive headteacher and governors have let the school decline from good to inadequate and have not demonstrated the capacity to bring about the sustained improvements needed to raise pupils' achievement.
- School leaders have not been successful in monitoring the quality of teaching and securing improvement. There have been significant staff changes, particularly in the current Year 2 class where pupils have had ten different teachers since they started in Reception. Parents of pupils in this year group are quite rightly concerned about the impact this has had on their children's education.
- The headteacher has not successfully carried out formal procedures for managing the performance of staff. Consequently there has not been sufficient focus on increasing the progress made by all pupils. The interim headteacher recognises the urgent need to implement, with support from the local authority, appropriate arrangements for the appraisal and development of all staff. However, there has not been sufficient time for the new arrangements to make any significant impact on the quality of pupils' achievement.
- The interim headteacher and senior leaders acknowledge that there has been too little assessment by teachers of individual pupils' attainment and progress. As a consequence, senior leaders have not had a clear picture of standards in the school. A process for the collection of assessment information is now in place but is not yet being used effectively by leaders or other staff. The interim headteacher, senior and middle leaders are beginning to look at samples of teachers' assessments and pupils' work to ensure that this information is accurate.
- Subject leaders understand their roles but do not make enough contribution to supporting improvements in the quality of teaching. Senior leaders have recognised this and have begun to develop the skills of middle leaders to enable them to support staff more effectively but it is too early to see any impact.
- Additional funding for the pupil premium has been spent on a range of activities designed to improve progress in English and mathematics. Some of the extra support has been delivered by staff that have had specific training. The impact of the additional funding for Year 6 pupils last year shows that their outcomes were in line with their peers. School leaders were unable to say exactly how the Primary Sports Funding is spent, or what impact it has had on the development and teaching of sports and physical education.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well in a variety of ways. The newly developed curriculum has links to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain, and develops pupils' knowledge of different cultures and religions. Displays of pupils' work about the community and different religions can be seen both in classrooms and corridors. Posters promoting the school's ethos, 'The Sarratt Way', are displayed prominently around the school; the impact of this can be seen in the courteous way in which pupils treat adults and each other around the school.
- Parents say that they want to support the school but feel they have been let down by, and have lost trust in, school leaders and governors. They say that communication with the school is not effective. They have concerns that the high turnover of staff is having a detrimental effect on their children's learning. Some parents say they do not get enough information about how well their children are doing. A large number of parents say they do not know who the school governors are and have not been made aware of how to give their opinions, for example, on Parent View.
- Safeguarding requirements have not been met as there are a number of staff who have not had safeguarding training. The school's First Aid training does not meet statutory requirements and although all staff have paediatric first aid training, at present no one has the First Aid at Work training.
- The local authority is fully aware of the school's decline in standards since the last inspection and has taken steps to provide a wide range of support to halt this. However, the substantive headteacher and

governors have not acted on the advice provided. The local authority issued a 'performance standards' warning letter in June 2014. School leaders still failed to respond to the support and advice that was given. Consequently, delegated powers were withdrawn from the governing body in July 2014 and an Interim Action Group (IAG) has taken over the management of the school's finances and personnel issues.

- The local authority continues to provide essential support. Advisers are working closely with the interim headteacher and school leaders, including the Early Years leader.
- The governance of the school:
 - Governance is inadequate. Governors have not been robust enough in holding leaders to account for weaknesses in pupils' achievement and teaching. They have not acted on advice given from the local authority. They do not have enough clear information about standards or the quality of teaching in the school and therefore struggle to ask the right questions. They are unable to plan strategically as they do not know what needs to be done.
 - Some parents stated at the parents' meeting that they were not aware of who was on the governing body and that communication from the governors about standards in school was lacking.
 - The recently formed Interim Action Group (IAG) is playing an important part in supporting school leaders and governors particularly with staff recruitment. The chair of the IAG has set the performance management targets for the interim headteacher linked to raising standards in teaching and pupil progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- In some lessons, tasks are insufficiently challenging and pupils lose concentration. Too often, pupils fail to engage properly with the activities they are set. This leads directly to pupils not understanding what they have to do and failing to gain the knowledge and develop the skills to make progress in their learning.
- In contrast to their behaviour in class, pupils' conduct around the school is generally good. They are well-mannered and keen to greet staff and visitors. They are kind to each other; this was particularly seen during lunchtime when older pupils helped the younger ones with their lunch. Older pupils, who were playing football, were careful not to hurt younger pupils with the ball. Pupils are polite, especially towards staff and other adults in school, for example, by holding open the door for others as they walked along the corridor.
- Pupils say they enjoy coming to school. They enjoy the different activities the school offers, and are particularly enthusiastic about the music specialist who comes into school to teach them how to play different instruments. Pupils said that if they have any problems or anything unkind happens in school, which is rare, they know exactly who to go to and that it will be sorted out.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is inadequate. Safeguarding arrangements do not meet requirements and the school has failed to ensure that appropriate first aid training has been provided for staff.
- All members of staff are checked for suitability before working in school. However, school leaders have not ensured that safeguarding training has been provided for newly appointed teachers.
- The school does not have an effective system for recording incidents of bullying or other misbehaviour. There are no records of incidents that have occurred at the school or the action that school leaders have taken to prevent recurrence.

- The school's curriculum is used effectively to promote equality and appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that pupils learn how to stay safe when using the internet.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate because teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly the most able. Weak planning leads to ineffective teaching, a lack of pupil engagement in many lessons and inadequate learning and progress.
- In some classes the teaching of mathematics is weak. Instructions are not clear enough and teachers do not ensure that the pupils have all the skills they need to be able to both take part in the activity and make progress. For example, in a lesson about calculating time differences, some pupils were struggling with the basics of telling the time on a simple clock and did not have the knowledge, skills or support to answer the questions successfully.
- There are pockets of good teaching in both Key Stages 1 and 2, but these are the exception rather than the rule. Where teaching is effective, the pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and able to use their skills in new situations. For example, in a Year 5 English lesson, pupils used their understanding of the structure and content of text to develop their own writing.
- The teaching of phonics (sounds that letters make) for younger pupils is improving. This is evident from the 2014 results in the Year 1 phonics check. The teaching of phonics in Year 1 is precise and enables many pupils to use their phonic knowledge confidently to write simple sentences, but this feature of pupils' writing was not seen in all year groups.
- Although some teachers mark work effectively, marking overall is neither consistent nor thorough enough and little guidance is provided for pupils on how they can improve their work. Teachers do not take the next steps in pupils' learning into account when planning their lessons.
- Teaching assistants do not make a positive enough contribution to pupils' learning. Too often they are used for administrative duties rather than working with specific pupils or groups to improve their achievement. They are not always told what their specific roles are in lessons or what pupils are expected to learn. Some examples of good practice were seen, for example, in Key Stage 2 where a teaching assistant used skilful questioning to develop pupils' ideas about a text they were discussing. However, this is not happening regularly in all classes.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Achievement is inadequate because pupils are not consistently making enough progress, particularly the most-able. Some pupils achieve high standards in reading, writing and mathematics, but too many pupils fail to make the progress that they should in their learning because weaknesses in teaching have not been addressed.
- Good teaching in Year 6 last year ensured that pupils caught up, and results in the Key Stage 2 national tests in 2014 indicated that some made better than expected progress. However, this is not replicated across the school. Evidence from observations, discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their work indicates that progress is much too variable.
- The most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. The work in pupils' books shows that, on too many occasions, all pupils are given the same activities, irrespective of the different abilities of the different groups in the class, so some pupils are not stretched.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs generally make expected progress from their starting points, but few make rapid progress. At times the work that is set is not appropriately linked to their needs and when this happens their progress falters.

- The achievement of pupils in reading is variable across the school because pupils do not have secure phonics knowledge. The proportion of pupils reaching the required level in the Year 1 phonics screening check was above the national figure in 2014. This is an improvement on previous years when the proportion of pupils achieving expected levels was significantly below average.
- Some less-able pupils in Years 1, 2 and 6 were able to use their phonic skills to confidently sound out and blend unfamiliar words. However, while some were able to talk about the story, what happened and the different characters, others struggled with this. Some pupils were demoralised by the difficulty of the books and were not able to read with fluency.
- After a decline in standards in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2 in 2013, results improved in 2014, bringing attainment back in line with pupils nationally. A number of pupils attained higher levels in the mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling tests. Nonetheless, given pupils' starting points, standards overall should be much higher.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- The majority of children start at the school with levels of development which are generally above those typical for their age. Most children make expected progress in the Reception class. As a result, they are well prepared for the next stage of their learning when they start in Year 1.
- The school tracks children's progress effectively and observations are used to inform children's next steps in learning. However, sometimes the activities which are planned for the children fail to take into account their levels of development. This restricts learning and slows the progress which children make.
- Although most children enjoy the planned activities, too much of their learning is directed by adults. This means that children do not have enough time to develop their understanding and newly acquired skills by exploring and experimenting for themselves. This is often the case in the outdoor area which is not used effectively to provide opportunities for children to extend their learning.
- Communication with parents of Reception children is good. Each child has a learning journal and information is routinely shared with parents.
- Children's behaviour is good. They play together well and are happy to follow the well-established routines. Good systems are in place to ensure that they are safe and secure while at school.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	117404
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	452248

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	169
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sandra Jackson
Headteacher	Dominic Bennetts
Date of previous school inspection	2 February 2012
Telephone number	01923 262003
Fax number	N/A
Email address	admin@sarratt.herts.sch.uk

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