

Dame Catherine Harpur's School

Rose Lane, Ticknall, Derby, Derbyshire DE73 7JW

Inspection dates

7–9 June 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- The proprietor and the senior management team (the governing body) have not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- The safeguarding arrangements are ineffective. The training for the designated leader for safeguarding has not been updated. The school's record-keeping of concerns is not robust enough. Checks on the suitability of staff have not all been completed.
- The early years provision is inadequate because safeguarding is ineffective in the school.
- Leaders have not demonstrated well enough the capacity to make improvements and check pupils' progress. They do not have sufficient time to fulfil these responsibilities.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their imaginative writing.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching are not as effective as they should be. They do not focus on the progress that pupils are making. This was a weakness at the previous inspection.
- The school development plan is not robust. It does not show how targets will be achieved. This makes it more difficult for the senior management team to hold school leaders to account for school improvement initiatives.
- Opportunities for staff training are limited.
- When teaching mathematics, staff do not consistently challenge pupils well enough to complete written calculations and meet their new school targets.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher knows the pupils well and has established a caring ethos where pupils are happy and learn well. Pupils' behaviour is good.
- The curriculum is good. Teachers provide plentiful opportunities for pupils to develop their scientific, and design and craft skills.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are effective
 - ensuring that the designated leader for safeguarding receives the appropriate training to carry out the role effectively
 - completing all of the suitability checks by ensuring that no staff are prohibited from teaching, and that all of the members of the proprietorial body have undergone the appropriate checks
 - ensuring that systems are put in place which will clearly identify when policies and procedures will be reviewed and by whom, particularly for safeguarding
 - ensuring that the complaints policy adheres to all of the independent school standards
 - ensuring that the school's development plan includes the specific actions that will be undertaken to achieve the intended outcomes, together with appropriate success criteria, to enable the senior management team to hold school leaders and other staff to account
 - providing time for school leaders to check on the quality of teaching and to lead school improvement initiatives
 - ensuring that the senior management team hold leaders to account for pupils' progress
 - providing more opportunities for training for staff to improve further the quality of teaching
 - focusing on the progress pupils make when evaluating the quality of teaching.
- Further improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' outcomes by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their imaginative writing
 - enabling pupils to complete more challenging written calculations in mathematics to reach the school's new targets.

The school must meet the following independent school standards

- The proprietor must ensure that arrangements to keep children safe are implemented effectively (paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the prohibition from teaching check is completed for all teaching staff (paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(b)) and the results are put on the school's single central record (paragraphs 21(3), 21(3)(a)(iii)).
- The chair of the proprietors must ensure that all of the suitability checks have been completed for all members of the proprietorial body, and the results put on the school's single central record (paragraphs 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), 21(7), 21(7)(a) and 21(7)(b)).

- The proprietor must ensure that the school's complaints procedure provides for a written record to be kept of all complaints, how complaints are resolved, the action taken by the school following a complaint, and to ensure that the information related to complaints is available for the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act (paragraphs 33, (33)(j), 33(j)(i), 33(j)(ii) and 33(k)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the leaders have the knowledge and skills to make sure that all of the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)).

The school must meet the following requirements of the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage:

- The provider must be alert to any issues of concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere. Providers must have and implement a policy and procedures to safeguard children. These should be in line with the guidance and procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) (paragraph 3.4).
- A practitioner must be designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children in every setting. The lead practitioner is responsible for liaison with local statutory children's service agencies, and with the LSCB. They must provide support, advice and guidance to any staff on an ongoing basis, and on any specific safeguarding issue as required. The lead practitioner must attend child protection training that enables them to identify, understand and respond appropriately to signs of possible abuse and neglect (paragraph 3.5).
- Providers must train all staff to understand their safeguarding policy and procedures, and ensure that all staff have up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues. Training made available by the provider must enable staff to identify possible signs of abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity, and to respond in a timely and appropriate way (paragraph 3.6).
- Providers must have regard to the government's statutory guidance, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and to the 'Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales 2015.' All schools are required to have regard to the government's 'Keeping children Safe in Education' statutory guidance (paragraph 3.7).
- Providers must ensure that all staff receive induction training to help them understand their roles and responsibilities. Induction training must include information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection and health and safety issues (paragraph 3.20).
- Providers must maintain records and obtain and share information (with parents and carers, other professionals working with the child, the police, social services and Ofsted or the childminder agency with which they are registered, as appropriate) to ensure the safe and efficient management of the setting, and to help ensure the needs of all children are met. Confidential information and records about staff and children must be held securely and only accessible and available to those who have a right or professional need to see them (paragraph 3.68).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- The proprietor and leaders have not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met consistently. They have not made all of the required checks on the suitability of staff. Prohibition from teaching checks have not been completed for members of the teaching staff. The school leaders do not know if the checks on the suitability of all members of the proprietorial body have been completed. These checks are not documented on the school's single central record.
- The proprietors, senior management team and school leaders have not taken sufficient action to address key areas for improvement identified at the school's last inspection in March 2015. This is particularly the case concerning safeguarding and checks on the quality of teaching.
- Leaders have not ensured that they review and update school policies and procedures, as required. On the first day of the inspection, the safeguarding policy was out of date. This was amended during the inspection. However, new safeguarding guidelines issued by the government were not mentioned in the revised policy. The complaints policy does not fulfil all of the requirements as set out in the independent school standards.
- Leaders' school development plan is weak. The plan does not contain details of the specific actions to be taken or when they will be completed. There are no milestones or success criteria in the plan by which the senior management team can hold school leaders or other staff to account.
- The leaders' capacity to lead improvements has been reduced significantly since the previous inspection. The school's financial resources have been very limited. Consequently, the time given to the headteacher to monitor standards and the quality of teaching has been greatly reduced. In addition, the few checks on the quality of teaching which do happen do not focus sufficiently on the progress that pupils make. This was an issue identified for improvement at the last inspection.
- The school's ability to provide continuous professional development for staff has been severely weakened due to the financial constraints. This has slowed down the pace of improvements. For example, leaders had hoped that the school's new target-setting system would have been embedded more quickly to raise standards further.
- The school has put in place an appraisal system to hold teachers to account. However, leaders only check on pupils' attainment at the end of the academic year. Leaders do not hold teachers to account for the progress pupils make during the year.
- The school's curriculum promotes pupils' good achievement across many different subjects. Pupils have the opportunity to learn about their local community. The younger pupils learn map-work skills through their village walk. Pupils study the history of Calke Abbey. Leaders organise a range of visitors to enhance the pupils' skills and knowledge. The most recent visitor has been an architect. Pupils learned about the structure of hotels, and have made boxes to attract mini-beasts to their own new hotel. In addition, pupils have the opportunity to participate in visits to the pantomime and a residential visit in Wales.

- The curriculum is further enhanced through the school's special days. These occasions have enabled pupils to learn about the cultures within the United Kingdom. Pupils celebrated Burns Day by studying the poetry of Robert Burns, and tasted haggis and neeps. Pupils also celebrated Apple Day by picking apples and baking apple crumble.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils are encouraged to respect each other and to listen to each other's views. The golden time on Fridays provides a special opportunity for pupils to receive awards for their behaviour and kindness. Pupils are able to nominate their peers for these awards. Pupils learn about other religions and cultures. Visitors have come into school to talk about Ramadan. Pupils have learned why Muslims fast and have tasted sweets that can be eaten during Ramadan. The pupils have raised money for a variety of charities, including Children in Need and Red Nose Day. They have also donated gifts for children in a Syrian orphanage.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school. They appreciate how staff keep them informed about what their child is doing. Parents comment on how engaged in learning their children are. All parents who responded to Parent View said that they would recommend the school to other parents.

Governance

- The senior management team is committed to the school. The team has overcome severe financial constraints to keep the school in business. However, this has meant that, due to the lack of funding for professional development and release time for the headteacher, new initiatives to enhance learning further have been slow to embed.
- The senior management team has not taken action to resolve all of the points following the previous full inspection. For example, members of the senior management team have not checked that the school's policies and practices are implemented effectively and updated as required. On the first day of the inspection, the single central record had many omissions and errors within it. Most of these were rectified by the school during the inspection.
- The senior management team do not support or challenge the school leaders well enough about the progress the pupils make. Although the chair of the management team meets regularly with the headteacher, there are limited opportunities for all members of the team to find out how much progress the pupils make.
- The senior management team does meet each half-term and has challenged the headteacher about how well the school has adapted to the significant increase in the number of pupils on roll during the current academic year. This transition has been relatively smooth and the school remains calm and orderly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- The senior management team has not adhered to its own safeguarding policy which is published on the school's website. Members of the senior management team have not ensured that the designated senior lead has updated her training to fulfil the role effectively. At governing body meetings, the designated senior lead has requested five times in the current academic year to access training for the role. The senior management team has not taken effective action to meet these requests.

- The designated senior leader is well aware of her need to update her safeguarding knowledge and gain the confidence to take the most appropriate and timely actions in response to concerns raised by staff and pupils. Current records show that actions taken to keep pupils safe have been slow. In addition, the leader's knowledge of external organisations which can offer support is limited due to lack of opportunities to discuss safeguarding procedures with other local professionals.
- The school's recruitment files did not contain the relevant information to support the information contained on the single central record. However, the school made extensive efforts during the inspection to rectify this. The administrator has also put in place a comprehensive checklist for any future staff recruitment to ensure that all of the necessary checks have been completed before a person is employed by the school.
- The school's record-keeping of safeguarding concerns is not robust. The actions taken by leaders are not consistently documented following concerns raised or disclosed. In addition, at the time of the inspection, confidential records were not stored securely. The school's leaders resolved this issue during the inspection.
- The school does complete risk assessments for the building and for educational visits. These contain the actions staff should undertake to try and reduce potential risks.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have an accurate view of how well pupils are achieving. They use this knowledge to plan the next steps to meet the pupils' needs. For example, in class 2, the teacher recognised that pupils could not tell the time as well as they should. Pupils were asked to show the correct time using an analogue clock. Due to skilful questioning, the pupils were largely successful at completing this task.
- Teachers promote reading well. Pupils study a range of good-quality texts, including 'Danny, the champion of the world' and 'The owl who was afraid of the dark'. Teaching promotes rich discussions of the texts to check the pupils' understanding and to develop their inference skills. Pupils are also encouraged to ask their own questions, which other pupils try to answer. Consequently, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of what they have read.
- Teachers use the local community well to help younger pupils gain a good understanding of geography. Following a walk around the village, pupils learn about the amenities that are available and compare them with facilities available in larger towns or cities. Older pupils have the opportunity to use ordnance survey maps to identify features in the local area, and to further develop their map skills.
- Teaching assistants and other adults make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They support pupils in class as well as on a one-to-one basis to enable pupils to progress well.
- Pupils' artistic skills are developing well. Older pupils learned about the vanishing point and painted perspective pictures to a high standard.
- The pupils develop key mathematical skills well in the early years and in key stage 1. Pupils learn their number bonds and then apply their knowledge to complete simple calculations effectively. However, teachers recognise that they need to raise their

expectations to ensure that pupils complete more difficult written calculations to achieve the school's new age-related targets.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. This is because the school's safeguarding arrangements are ineffective and potentially could put pupils at risk.
- Pupils are becoming confident learners. They are interested in their learning and are keen to complete the tasks set. They take pride in their work and will readily explain to visitors the work that is on display in the classroom.
- The school promotes the emotional well-being of pupils effectively. Pupils have the opportunity to nominate each other for certificates to reward kindness and for being a helpful friend. These nominations are celebrated in golden time on a Friday.
- Most pupils say bullying is rare. Pupils have the opportunity to write down any of their concerns and put them into the worry box. Teachers address these worries sensitively, and in agreement with the pupil who has expressed the concern.
- Pupils have the opportunity to use the village hall for part of the physical education curriculum, as well as going swimming each week. In addition, they have climbing frames and space to run around outside to stay fit. Some pupils said they would like to be able to participate in sport with pupils from other schools.
- The school has taught the pupils about internet safety. Pupils have learned how to respond to cyber bullying and know to speak to a trusted adult if they have a concern.
- Pupils enjoy positions of responsibility. Older pupils enjoy listening to younger pupils read. The school council is currently raising money for new scooters by collecting the proceeds from potato day each Wednesday.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Most pupils conduct themselves well in class and willingly complete their tasks. The classrooms are calm and orderly. Occasionally, some pupils need reminding more than once to focus on their work.
- Pupils are tolerant of each other. They respect each other's views, even when someone's views may differ from their own. The pupils work well together and often choose to complete challenges in pairs or groups, for example to build the tallest tower.
- Pupils' attendance is good, reflecting their enjoyment of learning and their happiness in coming to school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' ability to spell words and write grammatically correct sentences is good. Pupils have regular opportunities in class 1 to complete short pieces of diary writing. The pupils punctuate their sentences accurately and correctly form their letters.
- Pupils' problem-solving skills and mathematical reasoning skills are developing well, particularly for the most able pupils. Pupils are given regular challenges which make them think. For example, older pupils were asked which number, 4 or 6, will appear the most in a time interval of one hour using a digital clock. Pupils show resilience when having to complete more complex problems.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop good scientific skills. They understand the concept of fair testing and changing only one variable at a time. Pupils have many opportunities to investigate scientific concepts. As part of writing accurate conclusions, pupils are also using comparative language to explain cause and effect.
- The pupils enjoy history and have researched historical figures to learn about their impact on future generations. Younger pupils have researched Isambard Kingdom Brunel and have studied how the railways have changed over time.
- Pupils in class 1 complete regular written comprehensions about their reading books. They show a good understanding of the texts that they have read.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities develop the confidence to read aloud to the class to develop their fluency. Pupils' understanding of what they are reading is good and pupils explain their views well.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to develop their design skills. Pupils enter a design challenge with other schools. The most recent challenge was to build a ship's lift. As part of their Ancient Egypt topic work, pupils have built shadufs. One pupil wrote, 'When the pivot is near to the load, it will take heavier things.'
- Pupils display positive attitudes to their learning and have developed the key skills in English and mathematics to enable them to be prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils do have some opportunities to write creatively. Following their visit to Calke Abbey, the older pupils compared places at the Abbey to the settings in their reading book, 'Tom's midnight garden'. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their imaginative writing over time.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- The early years is inadequate because safeguarding arrangements are ineffective and this could potentially put children at risk. Consequently, several of the welfare requirements of the statutory framework for the early years are not met.
- The teaching in the Nursery is enthusiastic and lively. This inspires the children to be motivated and to quickly become confident learners. Children's behaviour is good. They remain highly focused on their learning for considerable periods of time and are making good progress from their starting points. Their enthusiasm for learning continues in the

Reception class. Last year, all children achieved the early learning goals. The children are well prepared for Year 1.

- The teacher uses questioning very well to encourage the children to speak in sentences. During a picture card game which focused on emotions, the children in the Nursery were asked to think of reasons why a child was upset. One child replied, 'I think he's lost his parents.'
- The curriculum in the early years is exciting. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developing very well. The children have observed the life cycle of a frog, through using frog spawn from the school's pond. They have learned how to use thermometers and read the temperature when the thermometer is placed in iced water and then hot water. In addition, they have created lava to demonstrate a volcano erupting.
- The teaching of mathematics is effective. The teacher encourages the children to realise that a number can be split different ways to make the same total. The children are learning a deep understanding about number to give them a solid foundation for future learning.
- The leadership in the early years is good. Assessments of the children's progress are regular and help to inform the next steps. The learning journeys consist of a mixture of informal and formal observations to help assess a child's progress. The observations cover a range of different areas of the curriculum and provide a comprehensive assessment of how well a child is achieving.
- The teacher in the Nursery has benefited from attending regular network meetings with other practitioners, because the meetings are free. This has enabled the school to work with other schools to moderate the children's work and check the teacher's judgements are accurate.
- The children learn about cultures different from their own. The children have made Chinese dragons as part of the Chinese New Year celebration. They have also celebrated Holi, the Hindu spring festival, by splashing paint with other children from local schools.
- The Nursery establishes very good links with the parents from the very beginning. Each child has a settling-in plan to ensure a smooth transition into school. Each term, parents are encouraged to complete their own observation of their child to put in the learning journeys. Parents also review their child's progress each term and write their views in the learning journeys.

School details

Unique reference number	113023
DfE registration number	830/6020
Inspection number	10026044

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	31
Number of part-time pupils	14
Proprietor	Dame Catherine Harpur's School Foundation
Chair	Mark Crouch
Headteacher	Margaret Whyte
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,995
Telephone number	01332 862792
Website	http://damecatherines.org
Email address	office@damecatherines.org
Date of previous inspection	17 March 2015

Information about this school

- Dame Catherine Harpur's School is a small independent school located in the village of Ticknall in south Derbyshire. The proprietor is the Dame Catherine Harpur's School Foundation. The trustees, who are members from the local community, form the proprietorial body. The governing body, which is known as the senior management team, manages the school.
- There had previously been a fall in pupil numbers, which had caused severe financial constraints. In October 2016, the school admitted a relatively large number of pupils after a local independent school had closed.

- There are currently 31 pupils on roll. This is seven less than at the previous inspection in March 2015. There are nine children in the Nursery. All of these children attend part time. There are two other classes: a Reception and key stage 1 class with 15 children, four of whom attend part time and a key stage 2 class with seven pupils, with one pupil attending part time.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. No pupils have a statement for special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The school aims to develop pupils to become rounded individuals, who are confident and engaged, with a life-long love of learning. The curriculum emphasises the importance of learning by doing.
- The school uses the village hall for games and a local school's swimming pool for weekly swimming lessons.
- The school's previous inspection was in March 2015. The school received a subsequent monitoring visit in October 2015.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in all classrooms. He looked at pupils' work and spoke with a group of pupils.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the school's administrator and the school staff, and spoke with parents at the start of the school day. He also met with three members from the senior management team, including the chair.
- The inspector scrutinised the school's self-evaluation document, the school development plan, appraisal records, information about pupils' progress, minutes of the senior management team meetings, curriculum documentation, and policies and records about how the school keeps pupils safe.
- There were four responses to the pupil survey. There were 17 responses to Parent View and 15 responses to the Ofsted free-text service for parents.

Inspection team

Martin Finch, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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