

Copperfield Academy

Dover Road East, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent DA11 0RB

Inspection dates

29–30 January 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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not make enough progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Too few pupils are working at or above the standards expected for their age group.
- Teaching, learning and assessment in key stages 1 and 2 are inadequate. Teaching is poorly planned and does not meet pupils' needs. Weak teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar across subjects is impeding improvements in writing.
- The curriculum is narrow and unbalanced in key stages 1 and 2. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is weak.
- Disadvantaged pupils in key stages 1 and 2 make weak progress because additional funding is not spent effectively.
- Over time, the trust has not been effective in supporting the school to improve.
- The local governing body, which has recently been disbanded, has not been effective in playing its part in reversing the decline in the standard of education. The newly appointed intervention board (IB) had not met at the time of the inspection.
- The new executive headteacher has made improvements in several areas of the school. However, these have not yet had a positive impact on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment or pupils' outcomes overall.
- Apart from in early years, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are inconsistent. Some pupils behave well, but others disrupt learning and a small number are unkind to others.

The school has the following strengths

- Parents and carers support the new executive headteacher and appreciate the improvements that have been made so far.
- In early years, leadership, curriculum provision and teaching are effective in ensuring that children make strong progress.
- Staff follow safeguarding procedures well. Pupils are kept safe in school.
- Current pupils' attendance has improved. Fixed-term exclusions have declined over time.

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?

- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management of key stages 1 and 2, by:
 - ensuring that effective monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment impacts rapidly and positively on pupils' progress, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics
 - ensuring that the curriculum is broad, balanced and implemented well, so that pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding consistently well across all subjects
 - improving pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
 - ensuring that effective support and challenge are provided by both the trust and IB
 - improving the impact that pupil premium spending has, so that disadvantaged pupils overcome their barriers to learning and make stronger progress.
- Improve pupils' progress across the school by:
 - ensuring that teachers raise their expectations so that pupils, especially those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, make strong and sustained progress towards reaching age-related expectations, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics
 - ensuring that teaching strengthens pupils' understanding and correct use of spelling, punctuation and grammar so that their writing improves
 - making sure that teachers use assessment information to plan activities that meet pupils' needs, particularly for those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils
 - improving the additional support provided for pupils with SEND.
- Improve behaviour by:
 - reducing the remaining instances of bullying and the use of derogatory language, particularly racist and homophobic insults
 - further reducing low-level disruption in lessons.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Since the previous inspection, leaders and those responsible for governance have been ineffective in ensuring that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, make enough progress in reading, writing and mathematics so that they are well prepared for the next stages of their education.
- Since joining the REAch2 multi-academy trust in 2013, the school's leadership and staffing have been turbulent. Several headteachers, leaders and other staff have left the school in this period. As a result, leadership has lacked stability.
- The Ofsted monitoring visit in October 2017 concluded that leaders and trustees were not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement outlined in the previous section 5 inspection. After the monitoring inspection, leaders and trustees did not act quickly enough to stop a further decline in standards. Consequently, pupils' outcomes by the end of key stage 2 declined dramatically in 2018.
- The new executive headteacher, appointed in September 2018, has put plans in place to improve teaching, learning and assessment. However, these recent plans have not yet had time to improve pupils' very low outcomes.
- Similarly, over the past academic year, leaders have introduced several improvement strategies. For example, closer monitoring of the quality of teaching and clearer assessment systems have been initiated. Nevertheless, these strategies have not yet improved teaching or pupils' outcomes.
- Parents told inspectors that they were disappointed with the decline in standards and staff turbulence over time. However, parents also expressed confidence in the executive headteacher and believed that leadership of the school had recently improved.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has not been used effectively to ensure that they make progress in line with that of other pupils nationally. These pupils receive some extra support, but this has not been successful in ensuring that they leave the school with the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need to be successful in the next stage of their education.
- Leadership of the provision for pupils with SEND is not effective in ensuring that these pupils make strong progress so that they can catch up if they need to. Recently, leaders have made improvements. For example, the register of pupils with SEND has been revised so that it is more accurate. However, these initiatives, though helpful, have not yet led to improved provision or progress in the classroom.
- The curriculum is narrow and unbalanced in key stages 1 and 2. Pupils do not develop their knowledge, skills and understanding across a range of subjects because leaders have not implemented the curriculum well. Leaders provide curriculum resources to teachers to deliver in lessons. These are based around subjects such as history, science and personal, social and health education. However, the delivery of these resources is poorly planned because teachers' understanding of progression in these subjects is weak. This leads to low levels of pupil engagement and weak progress.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in key stages 1 and 2 is underdeveloped. Teaching does not promote understanding in these areas and pupils' understanding of British values is limited.
- In the past, leaders have not made sure that staff training has addressed the needs of teachers or support staff. Recently, leaders have introduced improvements in training, but these have yet to take effect on the quality of teaching or learning support.
- It is recommended that the school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- Trustees and governors have not acted swiftly enough to halt a significant decline in the quality of education and standards since the last inspection. Trustees recognised that governors had not been effective in challenging and supporting leaders to improve standards at a local level. They disbanded the local governing body in the week preceding the inspection.
- Before the governing body was disbanded, governors' challenge and support of leaders were weak. Governors were poorly informed about pupils' progress. Governors' questioning lacked clarity and did not indicate that they were focusing on where standards needed to improve.
- The trust has set up a new intervention board (IB) consisting of former governors, the executive headteacher and members of the trust, to bring about more rapid improvement. However, at the time of the inspection, the IB had yet to meet.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Checks on the suitability of staff to work in school are carried out diligently and recorded accurately.
- Leaders have recently improved safeguarding systems so that these are now more effective. Pupils feel safe and staff are trained to recognise the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff know how to report concerns that they have. They receive regular training so that they are kept up to date with national safeguarding guidance.
- Staff work well with external agencies. For example, leaders were supported in facilitating meetings for children looked after by the local authority.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teaching is weak across year groups, except in early years, because teachers do not routinely use their knowledge of what pupils understand so that they can plan activities that meet pupils' needs. Over time, this has resulted in pupils' learning needs not being met.
- Teachers' expectations are low in key stages 1 and 2. Planned activities do not challenge pupils and some pupils, particularly the most able, complete tasks that are

based on concepts or topics that they already understand. As a result, pupils make weak progress, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Pupils with SEND are not supported effectively. Learning support is often not focused well enough on helping pupils further their understanding of topics or concepts. As a result, pupils with SEND do not make adequate progress.
- Teaching does not support pupils in catching up so that they reach the standards of which they are capable. For example, in Year 1, activities are set for pupils to complete without any reference to what pupils need to learn. Pupils move from one task to another, without adult guidance, and so do not finish activities or deepen their understanding.
- In mathematics, teachers' explanations are inconsistent. In some year groups, they are clear, but in others their explanations do not further pupils' understanding of concepts. Consequently, pupils' recording of mathematical methods is often haphazard and not conducive to remembering how to perform mathematical calculations.
- In English, in key stages 1 and 2, too few pupils make significant progress towards age-related expectations because reading and writing are not taught well enough. Whole-school strategies for teaching reading and writing effectively are lacking. Because of this, there is no shared view about the strategies that should be used to improve pupils' reading and writing.
- In Year 1, teaching does not ensure that pupils develop their understanding of the sounds that letters represent well enough. Phonics activities do not challenge or interest pupils. As a result, pupils often lose interest in activities and display poor attitudes to learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils are welcoming to visitors and keen to talk about their education. They are encouraged to treat each other with respect. Most pupils are courteous towards each other and staff.
- Pupils feel safe in school. Staff ensure that pupils play in safe environments during social times.
- Pupils have some opportunities to become involved in leadership roles within the school. For example, pupils can become 'young leaders'. However, leaders' coordination of this role is not consistent, so some pupils are not sure what to do.
- Pupils show a developing confidence in their learning. They are keen to answer questions or to ask for help when they need it. However, teachers' low expectations mean that pupils often lose focus in lessons and do not develop positive attitudes towards their studies.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- When teaching is not effective, a few pupils disrupt classes by talking over the teacher or distracting other pupils. This slows progress further.
- Pupils told inspectors that bullying takes place occasionally. Sometimes pupils use derogatory language, including racist and homophobic insults towards one another. Pupils have reported this in the past and leaders have put measures in place to stop it. However, a small number of pupils still behave in this unacceptable way.
- Pupils' attendance has improved. In 2018, pupils' attendance was below the national average for primary schools. Leaders have made improvements to the way attendance is managed. They have analysed attendance patterns effectively so that they can target their support. Current pupils' attendance is similar to the national average for primary schools.
- Fixed-term exclusion rates have been above the national average in the past two years. Leaders have put effective measures in place to reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- In 2018, Year 6 pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics was well below the national average for primary schools and in the bottom 10% of primary schools nationally.
- In 2017, less than half of pupils reached the expected standard or higher by the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics combined. This proportion declined in 2018, when it was less than a third. In both years, only one pupil achieved the higher standard.
- Less than half of Year 2 pupils achieved the expected standards in reading and writing by the end of key stage 1 in 2018. In mathematics, results were slightly better than reading and writing, but still below the national average.
- In phonics, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard by the end of Year 1 was below average in 2017. This declined further in 2018.
- Across year groups, current pupils' attainment, including for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, in reading, writing and mathematics is low. Pupils work well below the age-related expectations in these subjects. Pupils do not develop the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need in a range of subjects or in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Current pupils' progress from their starting points is weak, particularly for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. Work in pupils' books shows that, in comparison with pupils' books from last year, pupils are making better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, pupils across year groups do not yet make the significant progress they need to if they are to catch up and attain the levels of which they are capable.

- Leaders understand the importance of literacy across the curriculum. They have prioritised literacy development in their plans for improvement. However, basic spelling, punctuation and grammar conventions are not taught well across subjects. Consequently, improvements in writing are variable. For example, in Year 5, too many pupils do not use capital letters correctly to start sentences.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership in early years is good. The early years leader has an accurate understanding of the provision's strengths and weaknesses. She is working effectively with staff to develop further opportunities for children to use and apply their learning in the outdoor environment.
- Children make strong progress in early years and achieve well from their relatively low starting points. The curriculum is well designed and helps children build on their own ideas. Staff plan activities to cater for children's interests and inspire their natural curiosity. For example, an inspector observed children acting out the story of 'The Three Little Pigs' and discussing the addition of a new character to the story to help change the ending.
- Parents are regularly invited to contribute to their child's assessments. For example, parents include comments in 'sharing books' that are sent home on a weekly basis. This feedback is used to plan for children's emerging needs in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff also provide parents with activities and games to further support their child in the home environment.
- Children's personal development in early years is a strength. Staff provide children with clear guidance and set high standards for behaviour and conduct.
- Children have opportunities to develop their reading and discuss a range of interesting, age-appropriate texts. Children enjoy stories and use the reading corners to share books. They are well supported and expected to use their phonics knowledge to help them read.
- Safeguarding is effective. Children are supervised in safe and secure learning areas. All statutory health and safety checks are met in early years.
- In Nursery, children are well cared for by suitably trained staff. Teachers ensure that children develop their early learning skills well in a nurturing environment. Adults reinforce phonics development by providing interesting activities.
- Parents told inspectors that they value the good-quality teaching and the committed care and support in early years. However, last year, only half of the children in the Reception class transitioned into Year 1 at Copperfield Academy because some parents do not believe that their children will receive a similar standard of education in Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	139685
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10053368

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	558
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Jeremy King
Executive Headteacher	Simon Wood
Telephone number	01474 352488
Website	www.copperfield.kent.sch.uk
Email address	office@copperfield.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 October 2017

Information about this school

- Copperfield Academy is larger than the average-sized primary school. The school is sponsored by REAch2 multi-academy trust.
- The executive headteacher joined the school in September 2018.
- The trust has worked with school leaders to provide strategic direction in order to improve the school. Prior to the inspection, the trust had delegated aspects of governance to the local governing body. The local governing body was disbanded on 21 January 2019 and replaced by a newly formed intervention board. The board of trustees is the accountable body for all schools in the REAch2 multi-academy trust.
- Just under half of the pupils who attend the school are White British. There are small proportions from a range of other ethnic minority backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is above the national average for primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average for primary schools.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups. In several observations, senior leaders joined inspectors.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, senior leaders and trustees.
- Inspectors met formally with groups of pupils from key stage 2.
- Pupils' views from surveys were considered. Inspectors also spoke to a wide range of pupils during social times and lessons.
- Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work and observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff from a meeting with a group of staff and from the responses of 37 staff to the confidential questionnaire.
- Inspectors considered the views of 18 parents who responded to the confidential Ofsted parent questionnaire, including 16 free-text responses. Inspectors also spoke with parents at the start of the school day.
- Documentation scrutinised by inspectors included the school's plans for improvement, school self-evaluation, reports on attendance and behaviour, records relating to pupils' safety, minutes of governors' meetings, and information on pupils' outcomes.

Inspection team

Harry Ingham, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mary Ellen McCarthy	Ofsted Inspector
Shazia Akram	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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