

Seva School

Link House, Eden Road, Walsgrave Triangle, Coventry CV2 2TB

Inspection dates

15–16 January 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Trustees have been unable to make permanent appointments to important leadership posts. This is because of uncertainty about the school's future as a sponsored academy. The issue remains unresolved and continues to be a barrier to progress.
- Although much improved, the leadership and management of the school is still not consistently good. This is because some leaders are very new to post. Therefore, effective leadership systems are not embedded at all levels.
- The impact of the school's strategy to prevent bullying is inconsistent. Pupils say that some bullying issues have not been fully resolved.
- Some teaching is still not good enough to secure consistently strong progress for all pupils. On occasion, some pupils are not involved in classroom discussion. This prevents them playing a full part in lessons.
- Outcomes for some pupils are not as good as they should be. Gaps remain in their knowledge.
- The school is in the early stages of creating a careers information, advice and guidance programme. Therefore, at present, the support given to pupils in preparation for the next steps in their education, employment or training is ineffective.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' behaviour is a credit to them. Their conduct and attitudes to learning make a positive contribution to their increasing academic success.
- The early years provision is effective. Children thrive in the happy, stimulating environment. They settle well into school life and make good progress in all areas of learning.
- Several new teachers have joined the school since September. This has helped improve the quality of teaching considerably.
- Despite the turmoil and unrest caused by the uncertainty about the school's future, leaders have focused resolutely on improving the quality of teaching and the curriculum. As a result, the quality of education has improved much in a short time.
- Governance has improved. Trustees provide support for leaders to make necessary changes and hold them to account for the impact of their actions.

Full report

When Seva School was inspected in September 2016, it was judged to require special measures. Subsequently, the school was inspected on five occasions. At the previous monitoring inspection, leaders and managers were judged not to be taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently strong by making sure that all teachers:
 - identify and address important gaps in pupils' knowledge
 - apply agreed teaching strategies effectively
 - manage class discussions in such a way that all pupils are able to contribute.
- Implement the school's anti-bullying strategy effectively so that all pupils:
 - understand the different forms of bullying
 - are free from name-calling and derogatory comments
 - feel that bullying, when it happens, is dealt with effectively.
- Improve outcomes for pupils by ensuring that:
 - the strong progress that pupils make in most classes is evident across all subjects and year groups
 - all disadvantaged pupils make equally rapid progress in all classes and subjects
 - provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) continues to improve so that it consistently meets their needs well.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - arrangements for the school's future status as a sponsored academy are resolved quickly and permanent leaders are appointed
 - the current effectiveness of senior leaders is maintained when a permanent structure is in place
 - recently appointed middle leaders build on their early success in raising standards in the area for which they are responsible.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, the culture of the school has changed substantially. The emerging trust and openness that inspectors noted at the most recent monitoring inspection have blossomed into respectful and professional relationships.
- Staff believe that leaders are committed to the school and to its pupils. They see leaders taking the right actions to improve the quality of education. Staff feel fully involved in the process. As a result, there is a shared sense of purpose that is focused, above all else, on the needs of pupils.
- Because of ongoing uncertainty about the school's future status, trustees are not currently able to make permanent appointments to senior posts. This has led to much turbulence in the past two years. Several headteachers have come and gone. The changes have been very unsettling for pupils, staff, parents and carers.
- Nevertheless, trustees have found ways to bring in appropriate expertise to lead improvement. The arrangements for senior leadership that were in place at the time of the last monitoring inspection have continued. Trustees have made sure that these arrangements will continue for the foreseeable future, but the situation brings an inherent fragility.
- Senior leaders have built upon their early successes. They have accelerated the rate of improvement by meticulously addressing weaknesses in the quality of teaching. As a result, outcomes for most pupils are improving quickly.
- The leadership and management of the primary and early years phases are strong. These leaders have taken decisive and effective action to address weaknesses. As a result, the quality of teaching in the Reception class and Years 1 to 6 has improved substantially since the last monitoring inspection.
- Middle leadership has improved notably across the school. Some middle leaders use evidence about pupils' outcomes to identify strengths and weaknesses in their subject or department. They take effective action when needed. As a result, these leaders are making a positive difference to the quality of education. Some middle leaders and a new deputy headteacher joined the school very recently. Therefore, it is too soon for them to have had substantial impact on pupils' outcomes.
- The curriculum is under development. In the primary phase, pupils experience a rich, varied diet of learning opportunities. They gain knowledge well across a range of subjects. Leaders have widened the secondary curriculum to include a broader range of subjects studied to GCSE level. They plan to introduce alternative qualifications in addition to GCSEs. Leaders are in the early stages of considering how they might create an 'all-through' curriculum to build pupils' knowledge systematically in all subjects as they move up through the school.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding more effectively than in the past. This is improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, although more quickly in some classes than in others.

- Leaders are now more aware of the impact of additional funding allocated to support pupils with SEND. They have seen improvements in some cases, but they know there is more to do.
- Leaders have begun to plan more carefully their use of the primary physical education and sport premium. This is another new development, so it is too early to see what difference it has made.

Governance of the school

- Governance is improving. Senior leaders and trustees have formed an effective partnership. Particularly in recent months, trustees have not allowed the turmoil caused by uncertainty over the school's future to distract leaders and managers from urgently improving the quality of teaching. Instead, they have found ways to provide the expertise and resources that the school needs, while holding leaders to account for using these wisely.
- Trustees are more aware of their statutory responsibilities and are becoming more effective in ensuring that requirements are met. For example, the quality of information on the school's website is now broadly in line with that required by the DfE. However, the board of trustees has failed to carry out its statutory responsibility to secure an inspection of its religious character under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.
- Trustees cannot implement their strategic plans while discussion about sponsorship by a multi-academy trust continues. Therefore, the limitations of the school's current site continue to be detrimental to pupils' experience and quality of education.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's ethos of care, trust and respect means that pupils' welfare and well-being are important to staff. Staff are attuned to signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. They act quickly if they have concerns.
- Some pupils say that teachers' efforts to deal with bullying meet with mixed success. Often the issue is completely resolved but sometimes it is not.
- Designated senior staff communicate as needed with other agencies to share relevant information. They help pupils and their families get the support they might need.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Many new teachers have joined the school since the previous monitoring inspection. New policies and procedures have been introduced. These things are making a positive difference. The quality of teaching has improved in all phases. However, some staff do not implement some new initiatives consistently well. As a result, variation remains in the quality of teaching.
- Leaders expect teachers to manage class discussions in ways that help all pupils to contribute. In some cases, this strategy is working exceptionally well. Teachers' questions help pupils to think, reflect, evaluate and form well-reasoned explanations. However, sometimes teachers do not manage discussion well enough. Some pupils,

often boys, dominate the teacher's attention while others listen, but do not offer ideas. As a result, some pupils get less benefit from the discussion.

- Teachers have worked hard to gain an accurate picture of what pupils know and what they need to learn next. Much teaching demonstrates skill in teaching the right knowledge at the right time so that pupils make good progress. Other teaching is less successful. In particular, some teaching of pupils with SEND shows a lack of confidence. Consequently, progress for this group varies across the school.
- Some pupils have missing bits of knowledge caused by the weak teaching that they received in the past. Some teaching does not pay enough attention to these gaps. It does not make sure pupils make up for the lost learning. Therefore, the errors persist.
- Teachers add challenge to lessons by using what they call the 'DIG' approach. On the whole, this works well. Teachers guide pupils to complete work that is not too hard and not too easy. Teachers encourage pupils to challenge themselves to try a harder task. Sometimes, pupils naturally opt for the easy choice. When this happens, not all teachers guide them back to a task of the right level of difficulty.
- Without exception, classrooms are characterised by very strong relationships between teachers and pupils. Pupils trust their teachers and value what they do for them. As a result, pupils work very hard. This creates a climate in which pupils can flourish.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. While it has many strengths, there are elements that are not effective.
- Pupils are confident and enjoy school. Those who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe and that the school is teaching them how to look after themselves. They can identify trusted adults to whom they can turn if they are worried.
- Pupils are generally kind to one another, but not always. Some told inspectors they feel upset when others insult them, for example because of the way they look. Some said they had experienced this quite often and that they felt bullied as a result. Telling an adult had solved the problem for some pupils, but not all. This picture was replicated by pupils in most phases. Some younger pupils do not fully understand what bullying is. This leaves them vulnerable to being bullied without knowing what to do.
- The school's values provide a strong basis for pupils' moral development. They have a clear sense of responsibility, empathy and charity. They willingly raise money for carefully selected organisations and give their time to help the community. For example, the school council organised for pupils to work with a local charity last term to provide hot food to homeless people in Coventry.
- Pupils learn about the beliefs and practices of a broad range of different faiths. They are taught from the very youngest age to respect and celebrate difference. They talk confidently about what equality means.

- Pupils learn about democracy and how the law of the land is made. They understand how rights come along with responsibility. The school helps them to develop self-awareness and understanding in preparation to become adults in British society.
- However, in one respect, the school is not doing enough to prepare pupils for adult life. Although the careers programme has been in place for a number of years, it is under-developed. New leaders are working to improve it. Nevertheless, in its current form, the programme does not provide pupils with sufficient support to help them choose their future paths confidently.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well, and not just because their teachers expect them to do so. They do it because they know it is right. Very few choose to behave badly. On the rare occasions that this happens, staff manage the incident appropriately to get the pupil back on the right path.
- From the time they join the school, pupils learn to follow instructions without question. As a result, lessons proceed smoothly, and the school is an orderly environment.
- The school's playground is very small. It can get very busy at breaktimes. Even then, pupils usually play well together. They use the limited space sensibly.
- Most pupils attend school regularly. For secondary pupils, attendance figures are in line with the national average. Primary attendance is slightly below the national figure for pupils of the same age. However, the school's effective strategies to tackle low attendance are working for many pupils. Overall, attendance is improving.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for many pupils have improved notably since the previous inspection. However, this is not the case for all. Some pupils' progress is not as good as it should be. Some have not made up all the ground they lost due to weak teaching in the past. Insecure basic skills hamper some pupils' progress in reading and writing. For these reasons, outcomes for pupils need to improve further.
- Pupils make very strong progress in some classes. As a result, their attainment in these classes is rising quickly. This is why many pupils are now working at the standards they should be working at for their age and ability. More pupils now attain high standards, given their starting points. This picture is the same in both primary and secondary phases.
- However, in other classes, pupils' progress is limited. This is the impact of the inconsistent quality of teaching. These pockets of slower progress are present across the school. They are not limited to a particular year group or subject.
- Different groups of pupils make similarly variable rates of progress. For example, many disadvantaged pupils now make strong progress. Some now attain similar standards to other pupils nationally. In classes where teaching is weaker, disadvantaged pupils are not catching up with other pupils in the school or nationally.

- Rates of progress for pupils with SEND vary for the same reason. However, overall, pupils with SEND continue to attain lower standards than other pupils, and their progress is not good enough to help them catch up.
- The most able pupils now achieve well across the school. This is because teachers use the 'DIG' approach effectively to challenge these pupils in lessons. Their books show that most make strong progress over time. As a result, some pupils in each key stage are working at an exceptionally high standard.
- Some pupils in key stage 2 have weaknesses in the basic skills of reading and spelling. This is because, in the past, they were not taught phonics well enough. These weaknesses continue to hamper their progress. Some struggle to read fluently and they make basic spelling mistakes. Younger pupils now learn phonics well. They have a secure understanding of letters and the sounds they make. They are learning to read and spell accurately.
- Pupils' books show improvement in pupils' mathematical understanding. Most have a secure grasp of number facts. They are increasingly confident in using this knowledge to solve problems and reason mathematically.
- The improving picture of pupils' outcomes shows that they are increasingly well prepared for the next stages of their education as they move through the school.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders have invested much effort into improving the early years provision. They have succeeded. Children flourish in a welcoming, stimulating environment and learn well as a result.
- Leadership of the early years is effective. Accurate evaluation of strengths and weaknesses leads to clear and sensible plans for improvement. As a result, teaching has improved considerably in a short time.
- The Reception classroom is a lovely place to be. Children have plenty of space in which to play. It is clean and well organised. Children have easy access to a wealth of interesting resources that capture their imagination and make them want to learn.
- Children thrive because staff make them feel welcome, safe and happy. Safeguarding arrangements in the early years are effective.
- Children behave very well in the early years. They do as they are asked to do. They sit quietly and listen to the teacher. They take care of the equipment. Their books show that they work hard and take care with their writing.
- Most children have typical skills for four-year-olds when they start school. However, many do not speak English as their first language. Quite a few do not speak any English at home. In their early days at school, children are immersed in high-quality spoken English.
- At the same time, teachers use children's home languages to help them make sense of what is being said. As a result, children quickly acquire basic communication skills and start to make good progress in their learning.

- Phonics is now taught well in the Reception class. Children start to learn their letter sounds from the outset and soon learn to read simple texts. They attempt to use phonic knowledge to help them have a go at writing words and simple sentences.
- Staff in the early years work closely with parents to help make the transition to school as smooth as possible. For example, they visit children in their homes before they start. They also run workshops that help parents to support their children's learning at home.
- Teachers now assess children's progress continually. They use the information to help them plan interesting activities that appeal to children's interests and help them build new knowledge. An effective combination of directly taught tasks and opportunities to practise skills through imaginative play means that children make good progress across all areas of learning. Therefore, children are well prepared for the more formal curriculum when they start Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	141104
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	10053403

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	539
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Amarjit Basra
Headteacher	Rena Saggu
Telephone number	024 779 87619
Website	http://sevakeducationtrust.org/
Email address	headteacher@seva.coventry.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 September 2016

Information about this school

- Seva School is a Sikh faith free school. It is run by the Sevak Education Trust. It is governed by a board of trustees.
- Following the inspection in September 2016, the Department for Education (DfE) issued the school with an academy order, requiring the school to become a sponsored academy. Trustees and the DfE have not reached agreement over the choice of sponsor. The date of conversion to academy status has not been decided.
- The school is situated in a converted business unit on the outskirts of Coventry. Trustees have acquired a second unit and a substantial plot of land on the same business park. The school's plans to extend the curriculum on offer include the conversion of this space to include additional classrooms, a drama studio and an outdoor multi-use games area.

- The school currently has pupils from the Reception Year to Year 10. In Summer 2020, the current Year 10 pupils will be the first cohort from the school to sit GCSE examinations.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered evidence about pupils' learning by visiting lessons, talking to them and looking at the work in their books. Inspectors also heard some pupils read and talked to them about reading.
- Discussions were held with the acting interim headteacher; other school staff; the chair and vice chair of the board of trustees; a representative of Coventry City Council; and three groups of pupils. Other pupils and staff were spoken to informally as they moved around the school.
- The 56 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were taken into account. There were no responses to the questionnaires for staff or pupils.
- Inspectors examined a number of documents, including the school's evaluation of its work and plans for improvement; information about the attainment and progress of current pupils; minutes of the meetings of the trust board; and documents relating to pupils' attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Sandy Hayes, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Russell Hinton	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
Huw Bishop	Ofsted 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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