

# East Park Primary School

Hollington Road, Wolverhampton, WV1 2DS

**Inspection dates** 16–17 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because standards by Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics have remained low despite some improvements.
- Standards by Year 2 have declined slightly in the same period.
- Teaching requires improvement because there is not enough that is consistently good across the school.
- In weaker lessons, tasks are not well matched to what pupils know, understand and can do.
- Pupils are not given frequent opportunities to learn independently, to discuss or give extended verbal answers to questions.
- Pupils do not have good opportunities to take part in assessing their work and progress, or to correct errors in their work.
- Some leaders are relatively new to their roles and do not carry out independently the full range of activities needed to check on the quality of the school's work.
- Information on how well pupils are doing is not used as efficiently as it should be to diagnose strengths and areas for improvement.

### The school has the following strengths

- Very strong leadership by the headteacher and governors have secured rapid improvements in teaching and learning to raise pupils' achievement despite many changes in teaching staff.
- The most recent data show that most pupils made rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics during the last school year.
- Attendance has risen from low to average since the last inspection.
- Pupils feel safe at school and enjoy many aspects of school life. They behave well and have good attitudes to learning.
- The school provides a good quality, stimulating environment and a rich and interesting range of learning experiences for pupils.
- Skilled teaching assistants provide good support for pupils in lessons.
- Leaders have high expectations of teaching and staff feel well supported in developing their skills.
- Pupils and staff appreciate the positive changes and are supportive of the headteacher and the school.

## Information about this inspection

- Altogether, inspectors saw 30 lessons or parts of lessons. Inspectors were joined for half a day by a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter, who accompanied an inspector to five lessons in order to focus on the teaching and learning of deaf pupils.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, a group of governors, three groups of pupils and representatives from the local authority. Inspectors spoke informally to 17 parents and examined 18 responses on the online survey (Parent View). They analysed 69 questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors visited assemblies and sessions run by visitors, and observed pupils at play and lunchtimes. They examined a wide range of documents, including the school's improvement plan, assessment data, policies and records linked to safeguarding arrangements, and looked in detail at case studies of individual pupils.
- Inspectors carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work in mathematics to see whether the school's data on pupils' progress in this subject was reflected in books and to check on opportunities for pupils to use mathematical skills in practical ways and in other subjects.

## Inspection team

Susan Aldridge, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Rowena Green	Additional Inspector
Anthony Green	Additional Inspector
Wendy Hanrahan	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- East Park Primary school is a very large primary school. It was formed in January 2011 from an infants' school and a junior school on the same site. Before the schools merged the infants' school was judged outstanding by inspectors but the junior school was put into special measures and subsequently judged to be making too little progress.
- In March 2011, a new leadership team took over, with the headteacher of the infants' school appointed to lead the merged school. Since then, there have been many challenges including rectifying health and safety concerns linked to the predecessor junior school's building, very high staff turnover and recruitment difficulties.
- Most of the pupils are White British. Although the proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average, the proportion who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- Almost a fifth of pupils are identified as having disabilities or special educational needs, which is high. The school has specially resourced provision for deaf pupils. This year there are 19 pupils with statements of special educational needs across the age range who are supported through this provision, and they have most of their lessons in the mainstream classes. The proportions of pupils at school action or at school action plus are broadly average.
- A high proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Half of the pupils this year are eligible for the pupil premium, additional government funding to support pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable.
- A very small number of pupils have recently started to attend full-time alternative provision at Kingston Pupil Referral Unit, although they remain on the school's roll.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is registered childcare provision before and after the school day, and for all major holidays. This provides childcare and childcare training and is separately inspected.
- The school is a partner school in Wolverhampton's City Action Zone. It has partnerships with other local schools and is a Teach First school, helping to train unqualified teachers. The headteacher is a Primary Literacy Consultant in the local authority.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and encourage independent learning, in order to raise standards and improve pupils' progress, by ensuring that:
  - pupils know well their English and mathematics targets and are given opportunities to respond to teachers' marking
  - there are frequent opportunities in all lessons for pupils to discuss in pairs and small groups and to answer questions verbally at length

- tasks provided in lessons are well matched to the different abilities of pupils so that they provide challenge throughout each lesson but are not too difficult.
  
  - Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that:
    - staff with responsibilities independently play their full part in checking the work of the school and evaluating teaching and learning
    - information showing how well pupils are progressing is simplified and so used more efficiently to identify what the school does well and what needs to be improved.
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## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Standards by the end of Year 6 have not risen above low since the last inspection. However, this fact masks considerable improvement in the school since it was amalgamated. Low standards by Year 6 in 2013 result from the legacy of underachievement during the period when these pupils were in Years 3 and 4 in the predecessor junior school, when they made very little progress. Improvements in teaching and learning in the last two years resulted in their making much more progress than expected in Years 5 and 6. As a result, standards are beginning to catch up with where they should be.
- In mathematics, for example, pupils who were in Year 6 in 2012-2013 made less progress over Years 3 and 4 than they should make in one term. Inspectors' scrutiny of work confirmed that, in Years 5 and 6, pupils made as much progress in six terms as would normally be expected in almost 11. Despite this improvement, it was not enough to raise standards above low.
- By Year 2, standards overall are not as high as they were in the predecessor infants' school. To make effective use of the most skilled teaching staff in Years 1 and 2, some were moved into Key Stage 2, and this resulted in a slowing of progress in Key Stage 1. Nonetheless, the school's data show that the majority of pupils made more progress than expected in the most recent school year.
- The school's assessment of children's knowledge and skills on entry to the nursery shows that they arrive well below the level of development expected at their age. In the past, many made good progress. First-hand observations by inspectors suggest that current progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is mostly good but not consistently so because of some teaching that requires improvement.
- There has been a small rise in standards by Year 6. The government floor standards were not met in 2011. They were met in both 2012 and 2013, with an increase in the proportion of pupils who reached Level 4 in both English and mathematics each year. However, the proportion does not compare favourably with the national average.
- In 2012, a smaller proportion of Year 1 pupils met the standard in the phonics check than the national average. In 2013, because of work done to support staff in developing their skills, this proportion doubled and was above the national average.
- The progress and achievement of more able pupils shows a similar pattern to that of others. Few of those who had reached Level 3 in Year 2 were able to reach Level 5 in 2012 in English and mathematics because of their lack of progress in Years 3 and 4.
- In common with other pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs, the progress made by specially resourced deaf pupils has improved. This is linked to improvements in teaching in mainstream classes. However, it is not possible to say how their progress compares with pupils nationally because the use of national guidance to make comparisons is at an early stage. Deaf pupils make good progress in acquiring BSL when they are taught in small groups of similar ability.
- The school makes suitable use of the pupil premium funding. In 2012, the gap in attainment between those in the school known to be eligible for free school meals and those who were not was reduced significantly. In 2011 those eligible for free school meals were the equivalent of two terms behind their peers; in 2012 this was reduced to half a term. The gap was reduced in both

English and mathematics, so that it was equivalent to a term in English and much less than that in mathematics.

- There are no consistent differences between the progress made by pupils from different groups. For instance, in some classes and subjects, girls make better progress than boys, but in others the opposite is true. The same is true for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are not. It is too early in the school year for the progress of those in alternative provision to be measured.

### **The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it varies across the school. At this stage in the school year, some teachers are still settling in and getting to know the pupils. Several are new to the school and to teaching and a small number are training to be teachers.
- Most of the teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and engages children well. However, occasionally it requires improvement when the pace is slow or mistakes made by children go unnoticed so that children's progress slows.
- Although teachers show in their plans how they intend to support the learning of pupils with different needs during lessons, this is not always translated well enough into activities provided. Occasionally, more able pupils do not start on challenging tasks soon enough in the lesson, or pupils are given tasks that are too difficult. These weaknesses slow pupils' progress.
- Questioning of pupils during lessons does not encourage them often enough to explain at length, especially when it invites a simple 'yes' or 'no' response. Similarly, opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas in pairs or small groups are few and far between in weaker lessons.
- Assessment is accurate and checked within school and externally. Pupils are set suitable targets but are much more familiar with their English than their mathematics targets. Although pupils' work is marked thoroughly, they are not given enough opportunities to respond to teachers' marking. These weaknesses limit pupils' capacity to be independent learners.
- Skilled teaching assistants, a good proportion of whom are competent in BSL, support pupils' learning well during lessons. They sign to support deaf pupils' understanding of what teachers are saying, and clarify by using signs when they see that pupils are unsure. There is ongoing training for other staff to learn frequently-used signs.
- Staff establish good working relationships with pupils. Teaching is effective in encouraging pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, teachers make expectations clear, praise successes and positive attitudes, and reward good work and behaviour.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils are enthusiastic learners who are keen to answer questions and to do well. Their work is neatly presented and they are pleased to show it off. They are proud of their school and particularly some of the unusual things they do such as the 'singing and signing' choir. Much improved attitudes to learning, so that they are consistently good, has helped to accelerate pupils' progress.

- Behaviour around the school at break and lunchtimes is good. Pupils are polite and give a warm welcome to visitors. The school's records suggest that good behaviour is typical.
- Although a small number of parents expressed concerns about bullying, an equal number asked to see inspectors and they were adamant that the few instances of this are dealt with well. Pupils who spoke in groups to inspectors were clear that bullying is not a problem. They say it happens occasionally but is soon stopped.
- The school has raised attendance from low to a little above average since the last inspection and exceeded its own target. It recognises that punctuality is not consistently good and is working on this now.
- Despite there being a few pupils with challenging behaviour, there have been no exclusions since the school opened. Where pupils find it difficult to control physical outbursts, staff are trained to manage them so that no harm comes to them or to other pupils. Instances of this are correctly recorded.
- Pupils enjoy school and say that they feel safe. All staff completing questionnaires said that the school assures pupils' safety and most parents agree that the school provides a safe environment.
- Deaf pupils enjoy many aspects of school life and can identify those who are particular friends. Inspectors saw instances of hearing pupils voluntarily assisting deaf pupils both in class and at lunchtimes.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of how to keep themselves safe from harm. They are well aware of the dangers associated with using the internet, such as not sharing any of their personal information. The school's robust procedures for safeguarding vulnerable pupils add to pupils' feelings of safety while in school.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Considerable challenges have been overcome to ensure that the right priorities have been systematically tackled. Good teamwork has been instrumental in improving teaching, pupils' progress, raising standards, attendance and the learning environment. Additional opportunities have been provided for pupils to use mathematical and problem solving skills in other subjects.
- The headteacher is a highly competent and energetic leader who inspires staff to follow his lead. His determination and ambition are well reflected in the comprehensive school development plan, which is arrived at through a wide consultation process. Broad areas that inspectors judged as in need of improvement are identified in the school's plan.
- Changes to the leadership team have meant that the headteacher has needed to work alongside leaders to develop their roles. As a result, they do not all carry out independently the full range of activities needed to check on their particular aspect of the school's work. The school development plan recognises the need to extend their roles, for instance, to include checking the quality of teaching by observing lessons.
- Despite difficulties in the school's information and communication technology systems, the school has a wealth of data stored electronically. There is a good deal of analysis of this information but not all of this is useful in showing the school's strengths and weaknesses. This is

because some of the analysis is duplicated, using different ways of measuring pupils' progress, and so comparisons are not easily made. The use of national guidance to judge how well pupils with special educational needs, including deaf pupils, are doing when compared to their peers nationally is at an early stage.

- The school has assessment information it can rely on and a well-developed system of checking teaching and pupils' progress. Leaders intervene swiftly to make changes when pupils' progress slows. For instance, in Year 4 last year, slow progress was quickly noted, changes of teaching staff were made and these were followed by two terms of accelerated progress.
- Pupils appreciate the good range of learning experiences they now have, especially the opportunities to learn from first-hand experiences, such as visits, visitors to the school, enterprise projects and residential school journeys. These good attitudes are contributing to the increase in the rates of pupils' progress across the school.
- The local authority has provided good support to the school. Good relationships between the headteacher and local authority and strong partnerships have underpinned improvement work. Support for leaders new to their roles has helped to develop a system for tracking pupils' progress and the use of data to judge the success of the school's work, for instance.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- There is strong governance by a skilled and committed group who have a good range of relevant skills and expertise between them.
- Governors have an excellent awareness of the issues facing the school, and can explain why standards are as they are. They have a good grasp of data and they use this well to hold the school to account for its performance.
- The governing body plays its part in making decisions about how the budget is spent. For instance, they contributed to decisions about implementation of a revised pay structure for non-teaching staff.
- Governors are well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching. They are effectively involved in the recruitment of new teachers, and observe applicants teaching before they decide which to interview. They share the same high expectations as school leaders and ensure that teaching staff are awarded salary increases only if their targets are successfully reached.
- The governing body is active in checking the work of the school. For example, it has developed a set of indicators by which to measure the impact of primary funding for physical education and governors have observed lessons taught by coaches and spoken informally to pupils about their experience of these lessons.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104308
<b>Local authority</b>	Wolverhampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	426959

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	692
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tracy Doughty
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nicholas Sullivan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 February 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 558899
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