

Forestdale Primary School

Wareham Road, Frankley, Birmingham, B45 0JS

Inspection dates 29–30 April 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Some pupils do not make good progress in Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics, or in Key Stage 2 in mathematics.
- Teaching is not consistently good. In some lessons, work is too hard or too easy for pupils. Occasionally, teachers do not check on all groups during lessons to make sure pupils are doing the work they are given.
- Teachers' questions do not extend or develop pupils' thinking.
- Several members of staff who lead subjects are currently absent and key areas, including literacy, numeracy and special educational needs, are not being led and managed effectively. As a result, progress in these areas is not rapid enough.
- Senior leaders have not secured consistently good achievement and teaching since the previous inspection; standards are erratic.
- Attendance is below average.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress because they are given exciting activities to develop their skills.
- The number of pupils reaching the higher levels in reading at the end of Key Stage 2 has risen since the previous inspection.
- Pupils feel safe and behave well. School leaders have established effective systems to manage behaviour and these have reduced the number of incidents of poor behaviour.
- Parents have very positive views of the school and are right to think their children are happy, safe and well cared for.
- Leaders have created a harmonious and nurturing environment where all adults and pupils are valued and treated with respect.
- The governors provide a good balance of challenge and support and have a firm understanding of areas for improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They saw 16 part-lessons, eight of which were jointly observed with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with pupils, teachers, the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority and an external consultant who supports the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 10 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) together with other survey information collected by the school. They also spoke informally to parents as they brought their children to school.
- Questionnaires from 39 staff were received and their views taken into account.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils at break time, lunchtime and around school.
- The inspection team listened to pupils read, spoke with them about their learning and looked at the work in their books.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school's checks on how well it is doing, the school improvement plan, data on pupils' current progress, leaders' reports following lesson observations, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Heather Simpson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lisa Fraser

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The school provides a breakfast club for pupils.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises one Nursery and one Reception class.
- Most pupils are White British and almost all pupils speak English at home as their first language.
- A higher proportion of pupils than is usual nationally leave and join the school other than at the normal time of entry.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible to receive free school meals, is much higher than in most schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Latterly, there has been disruption to staffing and subject leadership.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to accelerate progress in Key Stage 1 in all subjects, and in mathematics at Key Stage 2, by making sure teachers:
 - make work challenging for all pupils, so some do not find it too easy or too difficult
 - check on the learning of all groups of pupils during the lesson in order to adjust tasks as necessary and avoid misunderstandings
 - ask questions to extend and develop pupils' thinking and give pupils opportunities to explain their answers.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that:
 - key subject areas are led and managed effectively during staff absences, and those holding these posts provide support and training to colleagues in order to raise pupils' achievement.
- Raise attendance levels so that they are at least in line with schools nationally by:
 - using current systems and external support agencies more effectively to persuade pupils who do not attend regularly and their parents of the value of the education the school provides.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Progress in Years 1 and 2 requires improvement in reading, writing and mathematics as pupils do not build on the good start they make in the Early Years Foundation Stage. While standards in Key Stage 1 have risen, attainment remains below average, especially in reading, where very few pupils reach the higher levels.
- The school's own records show that the progress of pupils currently in Year 2 requires improvement. Many pupils are currently struggling to make the latest nationally expected level of progress by the end of Year 2. Approximately one in four pupils join the school part way through Key Stage 1, but there is little difference in achievement between those present throughout the key stage and those who have a later starting point.
- Progress across Years 3 to 6 is good in reading and writing but requires improvement in mathematics. Progress is not consistently good year on year in all subjects and leads to variation in results. However, progress in reading is accelerating and the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels has increased since the previous inspection.
- Over time, standards at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated. They were average in 2012 when pupils made good progress in all subjects, but standards were below average in 2013 in mathematics and pupils did not achieve as well as they should. School performance data show the current Year 6 are struggling to reach average standards.
- School data and pupils' work sampled by inspectors confirm that standards in all classes in Key Stage 2 are currently below average, except in reading in Year 4 and Year 6, where pupils are on track to be in line with the latest national averages. Fluctuations in standards and rates of progress are due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and disruption to staffing and subject leadership.
- Children start school with skills, knowledge and understanding which are much lower than the levels expected for their age. Good teaching and a wide range of exciting learning opportunities, both indoor and outdoor, help children to make good progress in Reception. As a result, they enter Year 1 with skills that are closer to a good level of development at this age.
- Children get off to a good start in reading in the Early Years Foundation Stage due to the early and effective teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics). Their progress in reading slows as they move through Key Stage 1 and results in the Year 1 phonics reading check and Year 2 reading test are below average. Progress accelerates in Key Stage 2 as daily practice in reading is taught well and pupils begin to have a wider enjoyment and appreciation of books.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs requires improvement in line with that of their peers. Specialist advice and support are provided by outside agencies. Teaching assistants also provide help in areas which pupils struggle with. This practice helps them to keep up with their classmates, demonstrating the school's active promotion of equality of opportunity.
- The pupil premium funding is used for a wide range of purposes, including raising achievement, attendance and improving pupils' confidence and social skills. Overall, the progress of those eligible requires improvement but is variable. On occasion, this group outperform their peers. For example, the eligible pupils who left Year 6 in 2013 were on average about two terms ahead of other pupils in reading and writing but one term behind in mathematics. Schools' own data

show that there is little difference in the progress rates of those eligible compared to others in the school and the attainment gaps are closing, especially in Years 5 and 6.

- While almost all more-able pupils make the progress expected nationally, relatively few make faster progress in mathematics because the work they are given is sometimes too easy.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching is good in some lessons but requires improvement in others. This variation leads to inconsistent progress for pupils.
- Progress is restricted when teachers do not set work that stretches and challenges all pupils. As a result, some pupils find the work too easy and finish quickly, while others find it too difficult. Where teachers are occupied with some pupils, they sometimes miss what others are doing and, therefore, do not pick up misunderstandings or adjust tasks to make sure pupils achieve as well as they could.
- Questioning often does not make pupils think hard enough about the subject or require them to provide explanations as to how they reached their answer.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes, children make good progress because of effective teaching and learning activities both indoor and outdoor. There is strong emphasis on developing children's language skills. All adults regularly ask questions to check and extend children's levels of understanding and provide high-quality care and nurture.
- A wide range of exciting resources are available to support teaching and, in some lessons, these are put to good use. For example, children in Reception used gold coins to count out numbers to 10. Outdoors, they used a large three-dimensional construction kit to make a fruit machine with a handle to produce different fruits. As a result, children's mathematical, physical and language development were improved, while they enjoyed the activities planned.
- Relationships are good in all classes and pupils show respect for all adults and each other. Teachers skilfully manage pupils' behaviour to make sure that learning is not disrupted.
- Some teaching uses lively and imaginative strategies to capture pupils' imagination and develop pupils' literacy skills in Key Stage 2. For example, in a Year 4 poetry lesson, pupils examined a special box containing a variety of exciting objects. This gave them lots of ideas to create an imaginative poem about what they would put into their own special box. All pupils were engrossed and concentration levels were extremely high. They worked cooperatively, progress was rapid and their writing was of high quality.
- Teachers provide work with a greater level of challenge for more-able pupils in literacy in Key Stage 2. The work often helps them to make accelerated progress and reach the higher levels in this particular skill. Work in mathematics is less helpful in supporting more-able pupils' progress.
- Teaching assistants make an effective contribution to pupils' learning and collaborate well with class teachers. They provide valuable support for pupils who are struggling both within and outside lessons. This extra support ensures disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same progress as other pupils in school.
- Work in pupils' books is marked regularly and teachers add helpful and positive comments. Guidance is often given to tell pupils how they can improve their work and additional tasks or

questions are set to check that pupils have understood the work provided.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and want to do well. They work hard during lessons and are happy to discuss their work with visitors and other pupils. Their progress and attainment vary too much because the teaching they receive is not consistently good.
- Classrooms and areas around school are tidy and create an environment which promotes and values high standards. The overwhelming majority of pupils wear school uniform and are proud to be pupils at Forestdale. The breakfast club provides a useful resource for parents. Pupils who attend enjoy a healthy breakfast so that they are ready to learn when they go into class.
- Pupils behave well in and around school both in lessons and at break times and lunchtimes. Pupils say that behaviour is good and they know the different sanctions and rewards that are used. Every classroom has a 'zone board' for behaviour and this practice has been effective in reducing the number of behavioural incidents.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including verbal, physical and cyber bullying. They do not think that bullying is a problem in their school, but say they know who to talk to if they feel upset and that their concerns are dealt with swiftly. Parents also think that behaviour is good and that the school deals appropriately with any incidents.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Leaders make access to the building secure and all staff are rigorously checked before they are appointed. Pupils feel safe at school and parents who expressed their views endorse this opinion. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and are taught how to stay safe. When the school had a fire last year, leaders report that pupils swiftly and sensibly followed the fire evacuation procedures they were familiar with so that no-one was hurt.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils have time to reflect during assemblies, know the difference between right and wrong, and have a developing understanding and appreciation about others' beliefs and cultures. They have visited different places of worship. All classes learn to speak French. They treat each other and all adults with respect and work well together in lessons.
- Attendance is below average but improving. Figures are much closer to the latest national attendance data at this point of the year compared to the same period last year. The number of pupils who are persistently absent is also reducing, but not all parents have yet been persuaded that the education the school provides is important to their children's futures. School leaders are taking well-considered action to address this and are keen to work alongside these families and use all resources available to them to improve attendance further.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions has previously been much higher than national data. However, effective systems are applied and records checked show that exclusions have reduced significantly.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Senior leaders have not yet secured consistently good teaching and achievement across Key Stages 1 and 2. Achievement has fluctuated and staffing absences have led to some disruption

for different classes.

- Improvements in literacy and numeracy have slowed due to the absence of the leaders of these posts. While partly beyond their control, the headteacher and governing body know what a detrimental impact the depletion of the leadership team is having on whole-school improvement, and are working in partnership with an external consultant to resolve the difficulties.
- Senior leaders know the school well and their evaluations of its performance are mainly accurate. The right priorities for development are identified and actions taken lead to measureable improvement – for example, effective teaching of reading and writing in Key Stage 2 and better attendance.
- Good support is provided for those who are newly qualified teachers. Leaders make training and external support for all staff a high priority. The impact of this can be seen in staff gaining additional qualifications, for example, in special educational needs, and in improved teachers' marking.
- Senior leaders carry out regular checks on teaching using a wide range of activities. Information collected enables them to pinpoint and target extra support for pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Annual targets are set for all staff, both teaching and non teaching. These are linked to whole-school priorities and teachers' own personal development targets.
- The leadership of the Early Years' Foundation Stage is good and is shared between the Nursery and the Reception class teachers. Together they have a clear overview of how well the children are achieving and have appropriate plans for further improvement.
- A wide range of subjects are taught and these help promote pupils' literacy skills. Visits, visitors, clubs and outdoor learning also add to pupils' enjoyment of school and provide memorable experiences. Leaders are using the new primary school sport funding to provide swimming lessons and extra sports clubs, together with employing a specialist sports coach to teach physical education. As a result, almost all pupils having lessons can now swim, there is increased participation in competitions and staff members are more confident as they observe or teach these sessions.
- The local authority has an accurate overview of the school. It provides funding for leaders to work in partnership with a member of Her Majesty's Inspectorate in order to help secure further improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are fully committed to school improvement and the Chair of Governors, appointed since the previous inspection, leads his team effectively. They meet regularly and have a good understanding of how well the school is doing compared to other schools nationally as the scrutiny committee regularly check on the progress made by pupils and understand the performance data available. Governors keep themselves fully informed about the quality of teaching through the headteacher's reports, external consultant reports and their own observations of lessons. They set targets for the headteacher and staff. If targets are not met, as shown by pupils' progress, pay rises are not awarded. They know how the pupil premium funding and sports grant are used and the difference these are making to pupils' achievement and well-being. Governors regularly attend training in order to fulfil their statutory duties and keep their skills and knowledge up to date. Safeguarding requirements are met and school finances are managed effectively.

What inspection judgements mean

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

School details

Unique reference number	133759
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	427017

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	235
Appropriate authority	Birmingham
Chair	Steven Simpson
Select	Rebecca James
Date of previous school inspection	15 November 2011
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