

Forestdale Primary School

Wareham Road, Frankley, Birmingham B45 0JS

Inspection dates	21–22 June 2016
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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress and achieve as well as they should. In 2014 and 2015 the standards pupils reached by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 were below average.
- Disadvantaged pupils in some year groups do not make as much progress as their classmates in their writing and mathematics.
- Leaders' checks to ensure that teachers' expectations are high enough lack rigour.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good through the school.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' writing and mathematics are too low. They do not ensure that pupils use precise mathematical language or encourage them to explain their thinking.
- Some pupils have not yet acquired the grammar, spelling and punctuation skills needed in their writing. Some pupils in key stage 2 do not use joined writing as required by the national curriculum.
- Some pupils' behaviour is not as good as it should be.
- Attendance remains below the national average and has stalled from previous improvement. Too many pupils arrive late at the start of the school day.
- Governors' work is not as effective as it could be. Governors have not ensured that actions discussed are routinely followed up or consistently held leaders to account for school improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching has improved over the last year, most noticeably in last three months.
- As a result of better teaching, more pupils are making better progress than last year, especially in reading.
- The teaching of reading and phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is good.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.
- There is effective leadership and teaching in the early years. Children make good progress.
- Pupils are well cared for and are safe. Their conduct around school is good.
- The school promotes pupils' personal development and welfare well. Pupils benefit from good support for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards by improving teaching so that disadvantaged pupils, in particular, make better progress in their writing and mathematics, by ensuring that:
 - pupils use precise language in mathematics and can explain their reasoning
 - pupils use accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling skills in their writing with appropriate handwriting in all subjects.

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders are rigorous in their monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching in order to identify where improvements are needed, especially for disadvantaged pupils
 - leaders work in collaboration with parents to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality and evaluate actions taken
 - governors follow up areas of concern and hold leaders fully to account for school improvement.

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 requires improvement

- Leadership and management are not good as work to improve standards, teaching and attendance is yet to have the required impact. However, evidence gathered during the inspection shows that leadership is improving and there is capacity for further improvement.
- Senior leaders have implemented a comprehensive schedule of monitoring of school performance. However, leaders acknowledge that they have not previously been rigorous enough in their monitoring and evaluation of teaching or insisted that teachers have high enough expectations of pupils. This has led to variability in progress rates, for example between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates in some year groups. Governors rightly have confidence in the current leadership team and have extended the contracts of the newly appointed assistant headteachers for a further year. This is to enable the leadership team time to demonstrate that the actions they are taking are having a positive impact.
- Attendance rates have improved over the past three years. However, from the start of this academic year they have stalled and punctuality remains a concern. The learning mentor and leaders work with families in order to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality. However, this work is not evaluated and leaders accept that further work is needed to instil in parents the importance of their children attending school regularly and arriving on time.
- The majority of pupils who need to make more accelerated progress are disadvantaged. Senior leaders acknowledge that a review of the effectiveness of pupil premium funding is needed to help them improve standards further. Currently, funding is used to create more time for teachers and teaching assistants to work with this group of pupils. It is also used to enable pupils to take part in other activities, such as learning to play musical instruments. However, this has not improved progress sufficiently in writing or mathematics for disadvantaged pupils in some year groups.
- Leaders have established a more stable teaching team following staffing turbulence since the previous inspection. Teaching has improved, most noticeably over the past few months, as leaders provide clear feedback to teachers about areas for development. Senior and subject leaders are aware of the work they need to do with teachers to improve standards further.
- Despite pupils' progress in writing and mathematics improving over the past year, teachers' expectations remain too low. Leaders are taking action to address this and have accurately identified which pupils need to make better progress in order to reach the standards expected in writing and mathematics.
- Leaders and teachers work together to identify why certain pupils are not performing as well as they should be. Training and support are provided to ensure that teachers have the skills required to address such needs. For example, newly qualified teachers have been supported in their classroom management work which has led to pupils being more engaged in their learning and making better progress. The impact of this is not yet evident for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders have worked well with the local authority and other school improvement agencies. This work has ensured that the school's priorities for improvement are appropriate.
- Assessments, which show how well pupils are securing literacy and numeracy skills, are accurate. Teachers and leaders attend sessions, facilitated by a variety of experienced professionals, including those linked with a local teaching school, designed to support schools in making accurate judgements of pupils' skills and abilities.
- Leadership of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for children in the early years is effective. The two leaders accountable for these groups ensure that the assessment of pupils' needs is accurate and that subsequent planning and teaching is effective in addressing these.
- Pupils enjoy their learning as they are motivated by the topics selected by school leaders. Senior leaders have implemented a published curriculum to ensure that all relevant skills are taught in each year group. Subject leaders have changed topics in each year group to ensure that those selected motivate pupils to learn more. The curriculum is enriched well with a range of activities and clubs. These add to pupils' enjoyment and personal development.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. In the early years, children develop strong values. They learn to treat each other with respect and to value diversity. Throughout the school, staff are vigilant and do not tolerate discrimination of any kind. Pupils understand why British values are important, including tolerance and the rule of law. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

- The primary school sport funding has been used effectively to ensure that the aims of improving pupils' fitness levels and increasing the range of opportunities have been met. Sports coaches have been employed to work with teachers and deliver after-school clubs. Lessons and clubs have motivated pupils, with more pupils than previously playing sport.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have not held leaders fully to account for school improvement since the previous inspection. They have an increasing understanding of how well the school is performing but minutes of governors' meetings do not always capture information discussed. This means that governors are unable to refer back to previous agreed actions in order to check if school leaders have addressed areas of concern. For example, there is little written information about pupils' attendance. As a result, it is unclear how well informed governors are about this aspect or how robustly they hold leaders to account for improving attendance.
 - Governors know how pupil premium funding is spent and are pleased with the improving rates of progress for disadvantaged pupils in reading. Governors meet with leaders about the difference this funding is making but acknowledge that the impact of actions taken is not as good as it could be. A review of this funding is recommended.
 - Governors are committed to the school. Some members make time to come into school regularly. They visit lessons and talk with pupils. This has enabled them to evaluate pupils' views on the curriculum and feed this information back to senior leaders.
 - Governors are aware that leaders have been effective in tackling the weakest teaching. No inadequate teaching is evident in the school. Governors monitor the performance of the headteacher well and they have a good overview about the effectiveness of teaching in the school. Only good performance is rewarded with pay increases.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Governors ensure that all staff keep up to date with local and national developments by ensuring that they attend relevant training. All staff are fully vetted and checked to ensure they are suitable to work with children. Trusting relationships between staff and pupils help to ensure that the school provides effective guidance and support for pupils' welfare.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, teaching has not been effective in ensuring that pupils achieve as well as they should. Teaching is not consistently good in some year groups, especially in writing and mathematics. However, following staffing changes, a more stable teaching structure is now in place. This, together with effective support from senior and subject leaders, has led to better teaching this academic year.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils are not high enough in writing and mathematics. As a result, some pupils do not make the progress they need in order to reach the standards expected for their age. Typically, pupils who need to make more accelerated progress than others are disadvantaged. This means that this group of pupils is the most vulnerable at Forestdale.
- Pupils are not secure in their use of mathematical vocabulary or their reasoning skills. In Year 4, for example, pupils could not use precise mathematical language to describe how shapes translate to different positions on a grid. During the spring term, leaders made it clear to teachers the importance of giving pupils opportunities to practise reasoning skills in mathematics. Pupils' books now contain more activities which require pupils to demonstrate their understanding of mathematical topics. As a result, pupils are beginning to make better progress.
- Some pupils are not secure in their use of grammar, punctuation and spelling. For example, Year 2 pupils' books contain basic errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling in their report writing. This is because pupils' drafting work is not checked well enough and the errors are not consistently tackled and corrected. As a result, pupils carry errors forward in further writing activities and do not make the progress they are capable of, especially disadvantaged pupils.
- Most pupils present their work well. This has improved from the start of this academic year as teachers have made it clear to pupils how their books should be presented. Joined handwriting, however, is not used consistently in their writing by the end of Year 4, as required by the national curriculum.

- Reading is taught well. Children secure effective reading skills in the early years. Good teaching continues through key stages 1 and 2. In later years, pupils are challenged appropriately with harder books. Teachers and teaching assistants use their secure subject knowledge to question pupils effectively. Pupils are expected to explain their opinions about stories and develop higher-level skills. Such skills include inference, with pupils expected to consider and explain how characters might be feeling.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are taught well. The leader for this group ensures that teaching assistants working with the pupils have the skills required to address specific needs. Support for pupils, either in whole class teaching or in small-group sessions, is effective. Pupils make good progress as a result.
- Pupils with higher-level skills are making better progress this year than previously. This is because the work they are given makes them think harder in lessons. For example, teachers expect pupils to explain their thinking more often, which helps pupils consolidate their mathematical skills.
- The introduction of homework in topic-based books this year has encouraged pupils to take greater pride in their learning outside of school. Pupils are given a list of activities which they work on over a half term period. A good balance is struck between pupils consolidating key skills, such as times tables, and making choices about how to display their understanding. In Year 3, for example, pupils enjoyed sketching and writing about rivers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are proud to represent their school. During the inspection, pupils were keen to talk about their scientific and mathematical presentations at events in different secondary schools. These activities also help Year 6 pupils prepare for their move into secondary education.
- Senior leaders recognise the importance of children's welfare. The learning mentor and other staff work effectively in their allocated roles, which are designed to support pupils' well-being. This work ensures pupils are well cared for at Forestdale. All staff understand and apply up-to-date policies and processes, including those relating to child protection.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is well developed. Pupils have a good understanding about different cultures and faiths. They say they gain valuable knowledge through their religious education lessons.
- Pupils talk clearly about what British values mean for them. They understand why it is important to be tolerant and to show respect for others. At breaktimes, they apply such values as they play and interact with one another well. Equality is well promoted at Forestdale, with staff vigilant in their supervision to ensure that no pupil, or groups of pupils, feel discriminated against. All pupils are safe and feel safe.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and, when it does occur, they know who to talk to. Parents and staff say that any incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms bullying can take, including those relating to online activities.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Overall attendance has improved in recent years. It has now stalled and is currently below average. Systems are in place to challenge parents if attendance falls below certain levels. However, this has not led to sustained improvement.
- Work to improve punctuality has not had the desired effect of reducing the number of occasions when pupils arrive late at the start of the school day. This means that pupils miss parts of lessons which, in turn, restricts the progress they make.
- Leaders are taking firm action to deal with unacceptable behaviour and reduce the number of serious incidents. Several pupils have received fixed-term exclusions in recent years. Decisions to exclude were the result of unacceptable disruptive behaviour. Such behaviour was not repeated by the individual pupils concerned. Pupils were integrated back into school well, with nurture groups providing effective support for all pupils with specific behavioural needs. This demonstrates successful management in this area.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons, during the breakfast club and around school. Their behaviour at playtimes is good. The spacious play areas are well designed and supervised by staff. Pupils use play

equipment sensibly and move around the school safely.

- Most parents, and almost all pupils and staff, express positive views about behaviour. Behaviour has improved this year owing to improved collaboration between pupils and with adults. Pupils value their relationships with staff. In the early years, children have more opportunities than in previous years to learn about, and practise, social skills.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because pupils do not make consistently good progress and achieve the standards expected for their age. In 2015, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 was below average in reading, writing and mathematics. This means that pupils are not well enough prepared for the next stage of their education. Most pupils who left Year 6 in 2015 made good progress in reading and writing but too few made good progress in mathematics.
- Information collected during the inspection shows that current pupils are making good progress in reading. Although standards in writing and mathematics have improved this year, rates of progress are inconsistent in some classes, especially for disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics has improved over recent months. This is because teachers now provide pupils with more reasoning activities. This year, pupils are making better progress than previously in their writing but they do not show a secure grasp of grammar, punctuation and spelling. Pupils' abilities are assessed by judging a range of writing and so, without the necessary skills evident in different pieces of work, lower results are attained.
- Over the past two years, attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school have narrowed in key stage 1 but not yet narrowed in key stage 2. In 2015, disadvantaged pupils who left Year 6 made better progress than their peers in reading but less progress in writing and mathematics. Their progress compared favourably to national figures in reading and writing but was below in mathematics. Information collected during the inspection shows that disadvantaged pupils are now making better rates of progress but are still some way behind their peers in writing and mathematics in some classes.
- Outcomes in the early years are good and improving. This is owing to effective leadership and teaching. Children are challenged well in their activities. This has led to more children attaining levels expected at the end of the Reception Year.
- Over the past three years, phonics outcomes in Year 1 have improved. Last year a greater proportion of pupils than the national average attained the expected standard. This year, a similar proportion is likely to attain the required standard. Children in the early years receive good-quality phonics teaching which provides them with the skills they need to make good progress as they move through the school.
- The most able pupils make similar progress to their peers in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school. Last year, Year 6 pupils who started key stage 2 with higher levels of attainment made similar rates of progress to pupils with the same starting points nationally. Progress in all subjects, especially reading, is better than last year.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of the effective support they receive. Leaders ensure that teachers and teaching assistants know what pupils need to do in order to make good progress. Staff keep a close check on how well pupils are performing and change the work as appropriate.

Early years provision

is good

- Most children start in Nursery and Reception classes with skills and understanding that are lower than those expected for their age. This year, children's listening and attention skills were the weakest elements on entry. Over the past two years, attainment has improved, with an increased proportion of children joining Year 1 having reached a good level of development across all areas of learning. This year, the proportion has increased again.
- The early years is well led and managed. The leader is clear in her vision for further improvement and has ensured that teaching is good. Children make good progress through the early years in all aspects of learning. Teaching has been particularly effective in ensuring that children who need to catch up with their classmates are doing so. Teaching does not challenge the most able children quite as well. As a result, few children exceed expectations by the time they leave the early years. Partnerships with parents and external

agencies are effective. Staff listen to parents and use this information to help them assess quickly and accurately children's skills and understanding when they arrive in either Nursery or Reception class. Staff use expert advice from agencies whose role is to identify early barriers to learning. They use this information to closely check children's ongoing progress and adapt planning accordingly.

- Staff support children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. They have ensured that they plan activities which enable children to explore their own interests. Children are encouraged to express their opinions and choices freely. All groups of children progress in their understanding equally well.
- Children behave well and know how to stay safe. They understand the importance of playing and learning well together. They know adults' expectations and make sure they live up to them.
- From September 2015, leaders changed the admissions criteria for the early years to admit two-year-olds. Children are now able to attend Forestdale during the term in which they have their third birthday. Checks made on these children during the inspection show that they are well cared for and provision is good.

School details

Unique reference number	133759
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10012419

This inspection 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	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steven Simpson
Headteacher	Rebecca James
Telephone number	0121 464 8659
Website	www.forestdale.bham.sch.uk
Email address	enquiry@forestdale.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29–30 April 2014

Information about this school

- Forestdale is an average-sized primary school.
- Children in the early years are taught in one part-time Nursery class and one full-time Reception class. The early years includes provision for two-year-old children.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is rising but is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- Approximately three quarters of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to the national average.
- The school provides a breakfast club for pupils.
- There have been recent staffing changes, including the resignation of the deputy headteacher in February this year. A more stable teaching structure is now in place.
- Two assistant headteachers have been in post since February and a new deputy headteacher has been appointed for September 2016. The two assistant headteachers will continue in their roles for the next academic year.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes, including nurture groups. They visited 12 lessons, three of which were observed jointly with the headteacher or assistant headteachers.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the vice chair of the governing body and other governors and staff. Discussions also took place with advisers from the local authority and a school improvement agency that works with the school.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their reading and listened to them read.
- Inspectors examined work in pupils' books.
- The school's child protection and safeguarding procedures were scrutinised.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a range of documentation written to support school improvement, including minutes from meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of the 12 replies to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire. Inspectors considered a parental survey conducted by the school and also spoke with parents.

Inspection team

Jeremy Bird, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Maybank	Ofsted Inspector

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