

Forestdale Primary School

Wareham Road, Frankley, Birmingham, West Midlands B45 0JS

Inspection dates

15–16 January 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
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

- Too few pupils in key stage 2 have made the good progress that they need in order to reach national standards. As a result, outcomes are not yet good.
- The impact of strategies employed to support pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, is not widely understood by leaders and governors.
- The quality of teaching has been variable since the last inspection. As a result of recent decisive action by leaders it has improved. However, it is too soon to see the effect of good teaching on pupils' progress across the curriculum.
- Links with parents in the early years are good, but parents are less involved in their children's education as pupils move through the school.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher leads the school well. She has steered the school through challenging times. She established an enthusiastic and skilled staff team.
- Governors know the community and the school well. They are beginning to use a range of strategies to check and challenge leaders' actions.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff receive appropriate, up-to-date training that ensures they have the knowledge and skills to keep pupils safe.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well and show high levels of skill.
- Teaching is good. Pupils enjoy learning in interesting and attractive classrooms where knowledgeable staff care for them well.
- Pupils behave well. Relationships among pupils and between adults and pupils are positive and respectful.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that increasingly interests and helps pupils understand the world they live in.
- The school's work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is strong. Staff provide pupils with many opportunities to explore these aspects of their lives through a range of educational visits and activities.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for pupils, by:
 - providing effective support for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, so they make stronger progress across key stage 2
 - making sure leaders and governors use the detailed information that the school gathers on pupils to evaluate the impact of interventions on pupils' progress
 - engaging parents further to involve them more in supporting their children's learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has played a pivotal role in improving the school and leads with determination. She and the deputy headteacher make a strong team and have a thorough understanding of the quality of teaching across the school. Leaders know and understand the local community well. Leaders are very clear and realistic about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and know what needs to be done to improve it further.
- The headteacher has led the school successfully through times of staffing changes. A large proportion of the teachers at the school have been appointed since the last inspection. The leaders have established a firm platform for improvement through the successful appointments of new staff, and the rapidly growing culture of high expectations for all pupils.
- Leaders have created a positive culture of mutual support and improvement among staff. Leaders share a clear sense of direction and a desire to provide the best for pupils, both academically and socially. Staff are proud to work at the school and feel that senior leaders support them well.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching through regular learning walks, formal observations and scrutiny of pupils' work. Staff welcome this open approach and say they are well supported through regular training opportunities.
- The school's curriculum is carefully thought out. There is an effective balance between the teaching of academic subjects and other creative opportunities. Senior leaders are determined to offer all pupils a rounded set of experiences at school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed well through this broad curriculum. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their enjoyment of a range of subjects, including sports and the arts. They have also enjoyed recent visits including a tour of Edgbaston cricket ground and a trip to the theatre. All Year 3 pupils learn to play the ukulele, with extra provision for groups of Year 4 pupils to continue. Year 5 pupils play the flute.
- Middle leaders with subject responsibilities are, increasingly, supporting staff across school to improve their subject-specific knowledge and skills. This is particularly important as the school continues to widen and deepen its curriculum to ensure that its pupils gain a wide range of knowledge, understanding and experiences relating to the world outside their immediate locality.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) works effectively to help all staff, including teaching assistants, to develop their skills as teachers of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is having a positive impact on the overall quality of teaching.
- Staff morale is high. All staff that inspectors spoke to were positive about the school's direction and continued improvement since the last inspection. A confidential staff survey conducted during the inspection confirmed this view.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school and the community it serves well. They are clear about the school's strengths and the areas that need attention. They are well led and consistently seeking to improve the school.
- Governors receive regular and increasingly detailed information from senior leaders. They do not rely on this alone to gain insights into the effectiveness of the school. Governors have commissioned a range of external reports and make regular visits to the school to talk about progress, which gives them a clear picture of the school. However, the impact of interventions and support given to pupils that are falling behind is not always fully understood or evaluated carefully enough.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School leaders have worked hard to ensure that pupils feel safe and are safe. Keeping pupils safe is seen as everyone's responsibility.
- Leaders have made sure that records used to check the suitability of staff who work at the school are kept up to date. The records are well maintained and easy to navigate. Thorough checks, including obtaining references of newly appointed staff, are carried out prior to staff joining the school.
- Leaders ensure that training related to keeping pupils safe is timely and responds to issues within the local community. Staff know that it is their duty to report any concerns they have, no matter how big or small.
- Staff receive regular safeguarding updates and understand the key messages from the latest statutory guidance on 'Keeping children safe in education'.
- Effective early help strategies are in place to support potentially vulnerable pupils and their families. Leaders have worked well with a range of external agencies and professionals to provide effective mental health support for some pupils. Vulnerable pupils are well looked after in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is improving rapidly and is now good. The headteacher has addressed the legacy of weaker teaching, particularly in key stage 2, through a range of strategies. She has focused on the appointment of high-quality teachers. She has also used performance management of both teaching and support staff to improve their skills. Outcomes at the end of key stage 2 are still not good enough, because of previous weak teaching that has resulted in gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are strong. This is having a very positive impact on teaching and learning. The atmosphere in classrooms and around the school is industrious; teachers' enthusiasm is infectious. This was particularly true in a gymnastics lesson where pupils were given very clear instructions and demonstrations to enable them to make high-quality rolls and gymnastic movements.

- Staff demonstrate good subject knowledge. They know their pupils well. They plan learning that builds on what pupils already know and understand and this was very evident in pupils' books. Those falling behind are given additional support but the impact of this is not always monitored carefully enough so everyone is aware of its effectiveness.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed across the school. Inspectors saw examples of teaching assistants using their skills, particularly in questioning, to extend pupils' learning.
- Leaders regularly update the school's systems for monitoring the quality of teaching interventions and its effect on learning. However, the impact of strategies designed to help pupils falling behind is not widely known or understood by leaders and governors. They have not identified that some interventions are not helping some pupils to make the strong progress that is needed to enable them to reach national expectations at the end of Year 6.
- Reading is now being taught effectively because of recent training and involvement in a reading project with other schools. In key stage 2, using a whole-class text captures pupils' attention and helps all pupils to access age-appropriate texts. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils came to life when discussing their new book, 'The explorer' by Katherine Rundell. Follow-up activities successfully develop pupils' comprehension skills and extend their vocabulary.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving. Teachers provide more regular opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their understanding using pictures and apparatus to support them. Pupils are beginning to use correct mathematical language to explain their reasoning.
- Staff are sensitive to the needs of pupils with SEND. Support provided for pupils, especially those with emotional needs, helps them to effectively access the curriculum.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are polite, kind and aware of the needs of others. They relate well to each other and to staff. Pupils spoke with real pleasure about how much they enjoyed school and how well the staff care for them and look after them. They know staff would be there for them if they had a problem.
- Pupils wear their uniform smartly and are proud of their school. The school environment is orderly and attractive. There are many well-maintained and informative displays, both in and out of the classroom, that help pupils understand and celebrate their place in the wider world.
- Pupils are encouraged to show respect and kindness to others through the school's values system. There is a focus on empathy with others and staff work hard to balance a nurturing approach alongside developing resilience in pupils.
- Pupils, especially as they get older, are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility,

for example being part of the 'teaching and learning committee', where they are encouraged to learn about democracy, including through a visit to the Houses of Parliament in London.

- The school takes effective steps to deal with any issues of bullying or discriminatory language. Pupils told the inspectors that they feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including around dogs and when online.
- The school actively promotes a healthy lifestyle. Meal choices are healthy and pupils make informed choices.
- Staff provide excellent care for pupils and their families, especially those who need additional support.
- Parental involvement in matters relating to their children's education and strategies which enable parents to support home-learning are not fully developed.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils reported that the school's systems to support behaviour are effective. Pupils of all ages behave consistently well and there is a real work ethic and ethos of learning around the school. As a result, disruption to learning is rare.
- Most pupils are very interested in what they do at school. They have responded enthusiastically to the school's recent focus on reading. Pupils, generally, use their initiative and respond favourably when staff encourage them to use it. Procedures for managing and analysing absence are well organised. New attendance strategies are having a dramatic impact on improving the attendance of pupils, including those who arrive late at school.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions has recently reduced. Leaders work closely with families of vulnerable pupils to ensure that they receive appropriate support.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' current attainment shows that outcomes require improvement. Although teaching has improved, and is now good, more needs to be done to ensure that the improvements in teaching are leading to securely improved outcomes across the school. This is particularly the case for pupils by the end of key stage 2.
- The percentage of pupils meeting the required standard for the phonics screening check has been broadly in line with the national average over the last three years up to and including 2017. However, results for Year 1 pupils in 2018 showed a significant reduction in the proportion of pupils reaching the required standard. The school has put in place additional support for those pupils who did not reach the standard. This is beginning to have a positive effect on current pupils' attainment and progress in reading.
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics by the end of Year 2 has been below national average for the last three years. The proportions of pupils reaching age-related

expectations in reading and writing in Year 2 in 2018 were similar to the national average. However, the proportion of pupils achieving a greater depth in reading was below the national average.

- Pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics has declined over the last two years, with pupils making well-below-average progress in reading. In 2018 the proportion of key stage 2 pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was well below the national average. There has been a similar picture of low attainment at the end of key stage 2 for the previous two years.
- A large majority of pupils are disadvantaged. The gap between the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and their peers is beginning to close; however, interventions put in place have not had a great enough impact to ensure that disadvantaged pupils consistently achieve in line with their peers.
- Most pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points. This is because the work they are given to do is carefully targeted at what they need to learn to succeed.

Early years provision

Good

- The leadership of the early years is good. Leaders have ensured that children are able to access good-quality support and strong teaching.
- Some children enter school with limited skills, experiences and understanding in their communication and language and personal and emotional development. The team draws on a wide range of evidence and information about each child. By the time children enter the Reception class, staff know them very well. Although the outcomes vary from year to year, most children leave Reception ready to move to the national curriculum in Year 1.
- Children's learning is encouraged through a good range of planned activities, both inside and outside. When children are learning key skills, such as literacy and mathematics, the activities set up outside have a clear link to the main teaching focus for the session. This helps to build continuity in children's learning. They know they are learning to count dinosaurs in different ways, whether they are inside or out.
- Staff make sure that children learn and develop in a supportive, safe environment where they are well cared for and looked after. Children know the classroom routines and become increasingly independent. For example, they are able to choose activities, put on their coats and wellies for 'Welly Wednesday' and follow instructions well.
- When adults work on more-directed tasks with children they ensure a careful balance between intervening, asking questions and allowing children to have a go for themselves. They provide good role models and encourage children to share ideas.
- Children's acquisition of language and its use in communication is a high priority. Staff carefully model language as they speak with children. They used questioning expertly to encourage and extend children's vocabulary and confidence with words.
- Phonics is taught well. Staff make the sessions interesting and fun. Children respond well to this. Staff are adept at picking up and addressing misconceptions so that

children make good progress with their phonic knowledge.

- Children's learning is captured and annotated in learning journeys that the staff collate to record children's development. These demonstrate their learning across different areas of the early years curriculum. They are well organised, and the teacher ensures that children's next steps in learning are identified, alongside their successes.
- Links with parents in the early years are good. Parents are actively encouraged to keep in touch with their children's achievements and support their learning.

School details

Unique reference number	133759
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10053233

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adrian Ridge
Headteacher	Rebecca James
Telephone number	0121 4648659
Website	www.forestdale.bham.sch.uk
Email address	r.james@forestdale.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 June 2016

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 proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes across the school. Most of these lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Inspectors listened to pupils from Years 1 to 6 read. They also talked with pupils across the school about their experience of reading, both in and out of school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the SENCo, middle leaders and members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. The lead inspector also met with the school improvement adviser commissioned by the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including that related to safeguarding, the quality of teaching, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and conduct at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They spoke informally with pupils about their experiences of and attitudes to school. Inspectors were also taken on a learning walk of the school by pupils from Years 5 and 6 and spoke more formally about the school and the range of opportunities it offered them.
- Inspectors scrutinised a sample of current pupils' work, from all year groups and in a range of subjects.
- There were not enough responses to evaluate Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Inspectors considered two free-text responses from parents and telephone calls made by parents to Ofsted. The inspectors also took account of 24 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Heather Phillips, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sara Arkle

Ofsted Inspector

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