

George Betts Primary Academy

West End Avenue, Smethwick, West Midlands B66 1RE

Inspection dates

5–6 June 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive principal and two vice-principals provide strong leadership. They are ambitious for pupils. The multi-academy trust, governors and staff share this ambition. Everyone is committed to ensuring that pupils receive a high-quality education.
- Leaders, governors and the trust continually review the school's performance. They provide staff with good training and support to develop their teaching and leadership skills.
- Middle leaders are knowledgeable and skilled. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility because they make frequent checks on the quality of teaching.
- Good teaching means that from low starting points in the early years, pupils make strong progress by the time they reach the end of Year 6.
- Leaders monitor pupils' attainment and progress closely. They ensure that those pupils who are not making the progress they should receive additional support.
- Provision for pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils thrive because of the excellent care and support they receive. They are extremely well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Pupils' behaviour and conduct are exemplary. They take great pride in their work and their school.
- Leaders use additional funding well to ensure that disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make strong progress.
- Pupils enjoy a range of interesting activities across the curriculum. They have regular opportunities to use and apply their English and mathematics skills in different subjects.
- Children in the early years make a strong start to their education. Adults develop children's language skills well. This helps children to grow in confidence and make good progress across the curriculum.
- Leaders have accurately identified what the school does well and what could be even better. However, improvement plans are too broad. Leaders' checks on teaching do not focus tightly enough on pupils' progress.
- In some classes, pupils' progress in writing and mathematics is less strong than in others because teaching is less effective.
- Sometimes, the most able pupils, and the most able children in the early years, do not make the progress of which they are capable because activities are not challenging enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - improvement plans are more sharply focused on developing the quality of teaching
 - checks on teaching focus more precisely on pupils' progress.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - there is a greater level of challenge for the most able pupils, so that a higher proportion reach the higher standards
 - all teachers have high expectations of pupils' writing, and provide regular opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their skills by writing at length
 - strategies to develop pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics are embedded across the school.
- Further improve provision in the early years by ensuring that activities are sufficiently challenging for the most able children.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The strong leadership of the executive principal and vice-principals promotes a clear sense of purpose across the staff team. Leaders and staff are united in their commitment to ensuring that all pupils achieve well academically and thrive personally and socially. They are successful in their aim to develop pupils as 'responsible citizens, successful learners and confident individuals'.
- Leaders, governors and the trust have high expectations of staff. They provide all staff, including newly qualified teachers and learning support practitioners, with a breadth of training and personalised support, both within the school and across the trust. This ensures that staff's teaching skills develop well. Staff value the training and support they receive. They are proud to work at the school.
- There is a high level of support and challenge for senior and middle leaders. All leaders benefit from opportunities to refine their leadership skills by making a wider contribution to schools within the trust. This ensures that leadership at all levels is effective and that new leaders quickly develop the skills they need to drive improvements in their areas of responsibility. As a result, there is strong capacity to improve the school further.
- Leaders make regular checks on pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They meet with teachers to identify pupils who are not making the progress they should and those at risk of falling behind. These pupils receive additional support and leaders monitor them closely to ensure that their progress improves.
- Good use is made of the pupil premium funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well. Leaders have a thorough understanding of individual pupils' barriers to learning. They use additional adults to provide this group of pupils with the academic, social and emotional support they need to be successful.
- Leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND ensure that these pupils receive carefully targeted support to help them to make good progress. Parents are involved in discussions about their children's needs. Leaders work closely with external agencies to provide support in specialist areas such as speech and language. Comprehensive support plans are in place for pupils with complex needs and regular meetings ensure that leaders are fully aware of the progress these pupils are making.
- Leaders have created an environment that has pupils' learning and welfare at its heart. Together with assemblies, the wider curriculum promotes pupils' understanding of British values, including respect and tolerance for others, very well. Leaders embrace and celebrate the cultural diversity in the school and local community. As a result, pupils are extremely well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their reading, writing and mathematics skills in other subjects. The school employs specialist staff to teach and advise on some subjects, such as art, music and physical education. An example of the benefit that this high level of expertise brings to pupils' learning can be seen in the excellent artwork that is on display around the school.

- Mathematics is led well. Leaders have taken decisive action to improve teaching with a focus on developing pupils' skills in reasoning and mental arithmetic. Leaders have strong subject knowledge and use this effectively to support teachers to develop their practice. This is bringing about improvements, although the teaching of reasoning and problem-solving is not yet consistently strong in all classes.
- Leaders in English are knowledgeable about their areas of responsibility and monitor teaching regularly. They have clear expectations about how reading and writing should be taught, which means that there is a consistent approach to teaching across the school. Leaders have responded to a dip in pupils' progress in writing over the past three years by ensuring that teachers plan regular opportunities for pupils to write in a range of subjects. However, some variability in pupils' progress remains.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sports funding is used well to promote physical activity and improve pupils' fitness levels. Leaders have undertaken research into how obesity can affect pupils' academic achievement. As a result, they are passionate about ensuring that pupils are physically active and enjoy sport. Leaders use the funding to provide sports equipment for pupils to use at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They offer a wide range of interesting after-school sports clubs. These are well attended, and pupils' sporting achievements are celebrated in weekly assemblies.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Systems are in place to check the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Leaders routinely reflect on what these checks tell them about what is going well and what could be even better. However, leaders' plans are too broad. They do not identify precisely the aspects of teaching that need to improve. Checks on teaching do not focus tightly enough on the impact that teaching is having on pupils' progress. As a result, some aspects of teaching and pupils' outcomes are not improving as quickly as they could.

Governance of the school

- The local governing body are ambitious for the school and know it well. They are proud of the school and its pupils. Governors are supportive of leaders' work and hold them closely to account for pupils' achievement.
- Governors receive regular information from leaders, which ensures that they know what the school's strengths and areas for improvement are. Governors check that leaders' actions are improving pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Local governors and the trust board are kept well informed about the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes through accurate reports from the trust's senior regional director and 'progress partner'. These trust representatives visit the school regularly to scrutinise its work and meet with senior leaders.
- The trust board has a clear strategic overview of the school. Effective systems are in place to check on the work of the local governing body and senior leaders. By comparing the school's performance with other schools in the trust, the trust board ensures that leaders and governors are continually supported and challenged to improve.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Staff know pupils well and are vigilant to any changes in their mood, behaviour and appearance. They receive regular training on a range of safeguarding topics, including radicalisation and extremism. As a result, staff understand the risks that pupils face in the local community and the signs to look for that might indicate that a pupil is at risk of harm.
- Staff know the process to follow if they have a concern about a pupil's safety or welfare. They follow these processes diligently. Leaders respond promptly to the concerns they receive. Safeguarding records show a clear chronology of actions and outcomes.
- Leaders and staff work closely with external agencies to provide strong support for vulnerable pupils and their families. They maintain regular contact with the different agencies involved in pupils' lives so that they build a complete picture of the challenges that pupils are facing.
- Staff monitor vulnerable pupils carefully. Leaders meet frequently to discuss pupils' needs and to evaluate the impact of the support they are receiving. This helps to keep pupils safe and to ensure that any barriers to learning are addressed successfully.
- All staff, governors and visitors are subject to appropriate recruitment checks so that the school is a safe and secure place for pupils to learn.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. They plan interesting lessons to engage and motivate pupils. As a result, learning takes place in classrooms that are calm and focused. Relationships are very positive, and pupils are keen to learn. This strong sense of purpose makes a highly effective contribution to pupils' good progress.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to explain activities clearly to pupils and to demonstrate strategies in writing and mathematics accurately. As a result, pupils confidently apply what they have learned to complete tasks successfully. For example, in Year 1, pupils used a number line correctly to find the difference between two numbers.
- Adults develop pupils' use and understanding of vocabulary well, both spoken and written. This supports pupils' learning across the curriculum.
- The teaching of early reading and phonics is effective. Pupils learn to use their phonic skills to decode unfamiliar words and to spell. Reading books are well matched to pupils' phonic knowledge. This means that younger pupils quickly develop into fluent and independent readers.
- Teachers promote reading well. There is a structured approach to the teaching of reading in key stages 1 and 2. This develops pupils' comprehension and vocabulary effectively. Pupils benefit from having access to an inviting and well-stocked library from which they regularly borrow books. Teachers encourage pupils to read at home. As a result, pupils read confidently and enjoy using their skills to read in different subjects.
- Mathematics teaching is good. Effective approaches support pupils to use efficient mental strategies to solve mathematical problems and to recall key facts quickly, for

example, multiplication tables. Teachers are becoming increasingly effective in planning activities that challenge the most able pupils and require pupils to reason mathematically, although further work is needed to secure consistently strong practice in all classes.

- In writing, pupils make strong progress in the development of their descriptive vocabulary. They write in sentences of increasing complexity and learn to use a range of punctuation accurately. However, in some classes, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise and develop their skills by writing at length. Sometimes, teachers' expectations of the structure of pupils' writing and their use of grammar and punctuation are not high enough, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Teachers plan work that builds effectively on pupils' prior learning. They ask effective questions to find out what pupils already know and can remember before introducing new concepts.
- Adults monitor pupils' learning carefully. They are quick to notice when pupils are finding work too difficult or if they are making mistakes. Adults provide clear support and guidance in lessons to help pupils to improve their work.
- Learning support practitioners are well trained and contribute positively to pupils' learning. Teachers deploy them effectively to maximise their impact on pupils' progress. These staff have a good understanding of individual pupils' needs and skilfully support all pupils, including those with SEND, to make good progress.
- Pupils have many opportunities to apply their mathematical, reading and writing skills across the wider curriculum. For example, in a Year 3 science lesson, pupils planned and wrote a story about how to rescue the 'Iron Man' who had fallen into a pit. They used their scientific knowledge of forces and materials to solve the problem, while applying their writing skills to produce the story.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils are confident, motivated and highly enthusiastic about school. They thrive in a culture of care, nurture and high ambition.
- Strong support ensures that pupils develop into independent and resilient learners who are very well prepared for the next stage in their education. Pupils are encouraged to be positive when approaching a challenge and learn to persevere when they find things difficult.
- Pupils have high aspirations for their future lives. They understand the importance of 'learning for life' in helping them to achieve their goals. Leaders open pupils' eyes to the many options available to them when they leave George Betts. For example, pupils have the chance to visit different types of local secondary schools and universities. Visitors come into school to talk to pupils about different jobs and professions. Pupils are encouraged to think about what interests they might like to pursue in the future. For example, a display of mirrors prompts pupils to imagine themselves as future historians, artists and users of technology. During the inspection, one pupil stood in

front of these mirrors and said, 'I want to be a performer, look.'

- Adults share a strong commitment to supporting pupils' emotional well-being. They know pupils very well and are alert to their different welfare needs. They sensitively provide support for pupils who need extra help.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves healthy, both physically and mentally. During the inspection, pupils were keen to point out the range of books available in the library about mental health. Special events such as 'Active April', 'Mindful May' and 'Junk-free June' shine a spotlight on important issues for pupils and parents.
- Pupils talk proudly about their learning and experiences in school. They enjoy the many opportunities to take responsibility and help others, for example as play leaders, reading buddies, lunchtime helpers, safeguarding champions and members of the junior leadership team. As one pupil explained, 'School helps us to think about helping others all the time.' Pupils take great care of their school and recognise areas of significance that need to be looked after, for example the school garden.
- Relationships across the school are excellent. There is a high level of mutual respect between adults and pupils. Pupils learn to appreciate the different views and beliefs of their peers. Everyone in the school is valued for who they are.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations in school, at home and online. For example, pupils explained the importance of the school's lockdown procedures and why medicines should be stored safely at home. They understand the risks associated with using the internet and social media and how to manage these. Visitors from organisations such as local firefighters, the police and the NSPCC enhance the school's curriculum provision.
- Pupils feel safe at school. They understand the different forms bullying can take and say that bullying is rare at George Betts. Pupils are confident that adults deal quickly and effectively with any concerns they raise.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are extremely courteous and considerate to others. Their conduct in lessons and around school is exemplary.
- All staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. These are made clear to pupils and staff apply rewards and sanctions consistently across the school. As a result, pupils have a strong understanding of what is expected of them and rise to this challenge.
- Pupils understand the school's behaviour system and have complete confidence in its effectiveness. They say that the 'cooler' on the playground and the reflection room help pupils to improve their behaviour. Pupils view these strategies as supportive. For example, one pupil who was explaining the use of the 'cooler' emphasised, 'You don't talk to people who have gone there, you give them space and let them calm down.'
- In lessons, pupils listen attentively to adults and apply themselves diligently to tasks. Discussions between pupils and adults are very purposeful and focused on learning. At breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils enjoy socialising together and are kind to each other.
- Pupils have highly positive attitudes to learning. They take great pride in their work and present it well. Pupils are keen to learn and act swiftly on the guidance they receive

from adults. This makes a strong contribution to pupils' good progress across the curriculum.

- Pupils learn how to behave well in school and in the local community, for example, when travelling on public transport. This equips them with some of the essential skills to be responsible citizens.
- Adults support the social and emotional development of vulnerable pupils well. Consequently, the behaviour of the small number of pupils who find it difficult to manage their emotions shows notable improvement.
- Pupils enjoy school and value their education. As a result, rates of attendance are slightly above the national average. Few pupils are frequently absent from school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- From low starting points in the early years, pupils make good progress so that by the time they leave Year 6, the proportion of pupils working at the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics is typically in line with national averages.
- Although pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 has been below national averages for the past two years, work in books and the school's assessment information show that pupils make strong progress in the development of their reading, writing and mathematics skills in Years 1 and 2.
- The proportion of pupils who meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been above national averages for the past two years. Younger pupils use their phonic skills to decode unknown words accurately. Older pupils read with age-appropriate fluency and understanding.
- In mathematics, key stage 2 pupils' attainment and progress declined in 2018. However, improvements to the teaching of mathematics mean that pupils are currently making good progress in most year groups, although their reasoning skills can be developed further.
- The proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2 has been in line with national averages for the past two years. However, pupils' progress in writing has steadily declined over the past three years. Current pupils are making strong progress in writing in some year groups, but not in others.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND make good progress from their different starting points. This is because leaders and teachers identify these pupils' needs accurately and provide a wide range of effective support.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well. As a result, these pupils quickly grow in confidence in their spoken and written language.
- In most year groups, pupils make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding in a wide range of subjects. Pupils' achievement in art is particularly strong. The school is adorned with examples of high-quality artwork produced by pupils of all ages.
- Pupils' attainment at the higher standards in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2 is consistently below national averages. In 2018, pupils' attainment at the

higher standard in mathematics also fell to below the national average. This is because work does not consistently challenge the most able pupils to achieve the high standards of which they are capable.

Early years provision

Good

- Most children enter the early years with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age. From these low starting points, children make strong progress, particularly in language and communication. The proportion of children attaining a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year is steadily increasing, although it remained below the national average in 2018.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the provision's strengths and the areas that need further development. They provide effective training to develop the quality of teaching and learning. For example, training in writing has brought about improvements in children's ability to write independently.
- Teaching and the curriculum cater extremely well for the development of children's language and communication skills. Adults make thorough assessments of children's skills when they enter the early years and use these to plan support for children with low starting points. As a result, these children make strong progress and quickly close the gap with their peers. Adults model vocabulary well and encourage children to use this in their play and adult-led activities. They routinely expect children to speak in full sentences when answering questions or talking to an adult.
- Adults know children well. They make accurate assessments of children's learning and work with other schools in the trust to ensure that these are accurate. Adults use this information to plan tasks that match children's needs and interests. However, sometimes, teaching and activities do not sufficiently challenge the most able children, which limits their progress.
- The indoor and outdoor learning environments are well organised and stimulating. Adults provide interesting resources and activities that capture children's curiosity. As a result, children explore activities confidently and concentrate for sustained periods of time. For example, in Nursery, children focused intently on using water to help plastic ducks to travel down a drainpipe.
- Adults provide strong support for children's learning. They ask effective questions in adult- and child-led activities to extend children's ideas and develop their communication skills. For example, in Reception, three children were engrossed in setting a trap for the 'evil pea'. An adult skilfully encouraged them to consider the different materials they could use, which would work best and why.
- Children make good progress in the development of their early reading and writing skills because phonics is taught effectively. Children in Reception match sounds to letters and can identify the sounds at the beginning and end of words. They confidently compose simple sentences by using and applying their phonic skills.
- Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour. Children listen attentively to adults and to one another. They move sensibly and safely around the indoor and outdoor learning environments. Relationships are positive and caring, which means that children feel safe at school.

- During their time in the early years, children develop into motivated and independent learners. They work and play happily together in pairs and small groups. They help each other by sharing and taking turns. For example, children in Reception worked collaboratively to create 'soup' in the mud kitchen. Some children busily dug for soil, some collected water and others stirred the mixture.
- Adults engage effectively with parents so that they are involved in their children's learning. For example, all parents are invited into school each half-term to work alongside their children. Adults lead workshops to provide parents with guidance about how they can support their children's learning at home. They encourage parents to view their children's achievements using an online system.

School details

Unique reference number	139565
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10094510

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	462
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Caroline Whalley
Executive Principal	Allan Shephard
Telephone number	01215 580472
Website	www.georgebettsprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	allan.shephard@gbshp.org
Date of previous inspection	9 January 2019

Information about this school

- George Betts Primary Academy is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school is part of The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust (TEFAT). It is governed by the board of trustees. A local governing body is in place to hold leaders to account for the school's performance. This governing body reports to the board of trustees.
- The school is federated with Shireland Hall Primary Academy. The executive principal leads both schools. The school provides support for other schools in TEFAT and in the local area.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is in line with the national average. The number of pupils with an education, health and care plan is below the national average.

- There are two classes in each year group from Reception to Year 6. There is a morning and an afternoon Nursery class.
- The school runs a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in parts of 29 lessons. Some of these observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. One inspector visited the breakfast club.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime. They spoke formally with three groups of pupils as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school. Inspectors also took account of the 40 responses to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors listened to a group of pupils read and talked to them about their reading.
- Inspectors examined the quality of work in pupils' English, mathematics, science and 'learning for life' books. An inspector also looked at children's learning journals.
- Discussions were held with the executive principal, the two vice-principals and other school leaders. An inspector met with a group of staff to gather their views on school improvement, professional development and pupils' learning. Inspectors also considered the 36 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive and senior regional director of TEFAT. She held a telephone conversation with a member of the board of trustees. The lead inspector met with the chair of the local governing body and the director of governance for TEFAT.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans; information about pupils' achievement; records relating to safeguarding; minutes of governing body meetings; and information on the school's website.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day. They considered the four responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Claire Jones, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Walker	Ofsted Inspector
Janice Wood	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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