

# Galton Valley Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	135288
<b>Local authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	381862
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29 February–1 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Mary Hinds

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	510
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jackie Price
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah O'Boyle
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 June 2009
<b>School address</b>	Brasshouse Lane Smethwick B66 1BA
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 558 1690
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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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<b>Inspection number</b>	381862



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Mary Hinds

Additional inspector

Clare Saunders

Additional inspector

Andrew Phillips

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 22 lessons taught by 14 teachers. Inspectors also observed sessions where pupils were learning letters and sounds. They heard pupils read, watched them being taught in small groups and individually, analysed their work, and discussed their learning with them. Meetings were held with the headteacher, staff, members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and scrutinised documentation relating to pupils' attainment and progress, as well as leadership and management. Responses to questionnaires returned by pupils, members of staff and 318 parents and carers were also considered.

## Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school. The majority of pupils speak English as an additional language; the largest groups are of Bangladeshi or Pakistani background. Few are at the early stages of learning English. Very few pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high, as is the proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, although very few have a statement of special educational needs. The headteacher manages an adjacent children's centre. It was inspected at the same time as the school, but is reported on separately. Following the retirement of the previous headteacher at Easter 2011, two deputy headteachers acted jointly as headteacher for two terms. The current headteacher joined the school in January 2012.

The school has the platinum Healthy School status. The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>4</b>

## Key findings

- In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement. It is not satisfactory because pupils make too little progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, in Key Stage 1 and in reading at Key Stage 2, and the senior leaders have not been effective in raising the quality of teaching to resolve this.
- Pupils’ attainment is broadly average in writing and mathematics by the time they leave in Year 6. However, levels of attainment vary across the school and are exceptionally low at the end of Year 2 because significant groups of pupils do not make enough progress. Attainment in reading is low in both key stages.
- Reading, including phonics (letters and sounds), comprehension, writing and mathematics are not taught systematically. The curriculum is inadequate and is not planned well enough to ensure progression in the teaching of basic skills. Not all teachers and support staff have the expertise to teach these basic skills.
- The school is a harmonious, calm and safe place for pupils. Pupils behave appropriately. They are keen to learn more and to be independent learners.
- The new headteacher has gained the respect of pupils and staff, and is eager to secure rapid improvement. The governing body has only recently organised its committees to monitor the school’s work. Evaluation of the school’s work is not rigorous enough because leaders are not skilled in monitoring and evaluating the progress groups of pupils make or planning for improvement. They have not managed the performance of teachers and support staff well enough to eradicate inadequate teaching or raise the overall quality.

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

- Raise achievement and the quality of teaching so that by July 2013 attainment is at least in line with national averages in mathematics and English, by:
  - ensuring that there is a systematic approach to teaching skills in phonics, reading, writing and mathematics, and providing opportunities for pupils to use and apply these skills across the curriculum
  - making effective use of assessment information to ensure that work is always well matched to pupils' abilities
  - assessing pupils' ongoing progress in lessons so that tasks can be adapted if necessary
  - using support staff more effectively to accelerate pupils' learning and to encourage pupils to work independently.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of all leaders and the governing body in order to secure rapid improvement by:
  - regularly and rigorously monitoring of the quality of teaching and using this information to provide a coherent programme of professional development for all staff
  - regularly checking that assessments are accurate and tracking the progress made all pupils, groups and classes in order to set challenging targets and to hold teachers to account for pupils' progress
  - training leaders so they have the skills to monitor their areas of responsibility using all evidence, including national data, and to accurately prioritise, plan and evaluate for improvement.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Children join the Nursery with skills that are well below what is expected for their age. Although they make satisfactory progress in their personal, social and emotional development, significant groups of children enter Year 1 with poor skills in reading, writing and mathematics. In the Early Years Foundation Stage phonics are not taught consistently well, adults do not always intervene to support and extend children's learning, and there are too few purposeful activities to promote key skills.

Inadequate teaching in Key Stage 1 results in pupils remaining well behind their national peers, particularly in reading. Most parents and carers who returned a questionnaire feel that their children are making good progress. Inspectors found that progress is not good enough and that the gap between similar groups and all pupils nationally by the end of Year 2 has not reduced in the last four years. Girls achieve as well as other girls nationally and all pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. However, all other groups, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, perform significantly less well than similar groups

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nationally in all three subjects. For example, boys are a year behind in their reading, writing and mathematics. Reading levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are below average. Progress is satisfactory overall across Key Stage 2 for all groups of pupils, but uneven. Attainment is broadly average in writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 because pupils make accelerated progress in upper Key Stage 2, particularly in Year 6 where the quality of teaching is consistently good. However, too few pupils achieve the higher levels in reading and writing.

Pupils are not learning essential skills, particularly in reading, because some teachers and support staff lack subject knowledge and expertise. Pupils are not always able to tackle unfamiliar words, or blend sounds in order to spell and write words, because they do not have enough opportunities to practise these skills. Adults do not always articulate individual sounds correctly and sometimes tell pupils what sounds letters make, rather than encouraging them to have a go for themselves. Pupils' insecure decoding skills prevent them from reading fluently. Guided reading sessions do not always include opportunities for pupils to discuss their reading, and this impedes their understanding.

### **Quality of teaching**

Most parents and carers who returned the questionnaire feel that teaching is good, although a few commented that their children are not challenged enough. This positive response is also reflected in the pupils' questionnaires. However, inspectors found that teaching was inadequate, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. When teaching does not promote progress well enough, teachers do not have a secure knowledge of what pupils are capable of achieving and activities are not sharply focused to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. As a consequence some pupils do not understand what they should be learning, or they are unable to complete an activity without adult intervention. Those pupils who experience difficulties are not routinely identified, and valuable learning time is lost. Support assistants sometimes give pupils the answer to problems rather than asking questions to guide their learning and encourage greater independence. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have specific programmes with short-term targets. However, intervention work is not routinely evaluated, preventing these pupils from benefiting from strategies that could make a more significant difference to their learning.

In the best lessons, pupils are highly motivated independent learners because tasks are tailored to individual ability levels precisely. Here, pupils are involved in identifying the steps they need to take to achieve success. Teachers ask probing questions within lessons to assess understanding, and as a consequence adjust their teaching so that pupils can practise, consolidate or extend their learning. In two mathematics lessons in Year 6 pupils were challenged to solve problems using percentages. The teachers displayed excellent subject knowledge and the environment made pupils want to learn even more. The teachers' well-crafted questions and use of mathematical vocabulary helped pupils to make strong links with previous learning and with concepts such as decimals and fractions, thereby

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deepening their understanding. Teaching assistants also questioned pupils effectively and guided their learning well.

Pupils work collaboratively and display fascination and creativity when solving problems, reflecting the effective promotion of their spiritual development. Almost all teachers have a positive impact on pupils' social and moral development. Teachers routinely celebrate pupils' achievements to raise their self-confidence. Pupils are encouraged to help and support one another, and they respect each other's opinions and work. The school is a cohesive community and pupils get on well together.

The curriculum does not promote learning sufficiently, particularly in early literacy and numeracy skills and in reading at Key Stage 2. It is not planned to build progressively on what pupils already know, understand and can do. The school has worked hard to provide a stimulating 'Irresistible Curriculum' which is designed to create links between subjects and encourages pupils to be resilient and creative. However, there are lost opportunities for pupils to practise their reading, writing and mathematical skills within these thematic units. The new marking policy has secured recent improvements in the quality of marking and marking now provides clear guidance for pupils on how they can improve their work. Some teachers give pupils time to practise improvement points, but this is not firmly established across the school.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Almost all parents and carers are positive about pupils' behaviour and they feel that the school keeps their children safe. This is reflected in the questionnaires completed by pupils and what pupils told inspectors. Pupils say that they feel very safe and that there is little bullying. If bullying does occur it is dealt with immediately. The school's records show that there have been very few incidents of any type of bullying or racist incidents. Pupils are confident that if a problem should arise their concerns will be dealt with by staff. They have a clear understanding of how to stay safe and they have a good awareness of the potential dangers of the internet and social networking sites.

Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They told inspectors that they would like to spend more time discussing what they were going to learn and that they would like to work harder. This mature attitude makes a considerable contribution to their progress in Key Stage 2 but is not fully exploited by all teachers. Across the school relationships are strong. Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds get on well together in lessons and at break times. The school's nurture provision provides pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable with good support and care on a small-group basis.

Attendance rates have improved. A range of robust strategies, from attendance awards to effective multi-agency working with families, encourages pupils to come to school. As a consequence attendance is now average.

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## Leadership and management

The school has been too slow to address the issues identified in the previous inspection. This lack of success demonstrates that the school does not have the capacity to improve. Leaders, including the governing body, do not regularly monitor, analyse and evaluate the progress made by different groups of pupils. They are unaware of how well these groups achieve or how they perform in relation to national standards. Assessments have not been checked externally to gauge how accurate they are. This means that the level of expectation for pupils is not as ambitious as it should be. Although there has been a cycle of monitoring there is no clear picture of strengths and weaknesses, nor identification of what teachers and support staff need to do to improve their practice. Professional development has been generic, rather than specifically matched to individuals' particular needs. Senior and middle leaders are eager to secure improvements but are inexperienced in self-evaluation and action planning. This lack of evaluation also means that shortcomings in the curriculum have not been identified. The curriculum is inadequate as it does not meet the needs of all pupils, fails to ensure equality of opportunity and does not focus enough on developing literacy and mathematics in all subjects. Nevertheless, the curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development satisfactorily. Leaders also ensure that discrimination is tackled and that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

The length of time taken to appoint a new headteacher distracted the governing body from fulfilling its most important role of monitoring and evaluating the work of the school in order to hold senior leaders to account. The recent appointment of the headteacher has raised morale. She has high expectations and has secured the commitment of the governing body and teachers to achieve success. Within weeks she has evaluated correctly the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Her judgements on the quality of teaching and learning are accurate. Both she and the Chair of the Governing Body are under no illusions about the considerable challenges ahead, but they are committed to ensuring that the school rapidly improves.



## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



2 March 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Galton Valley Primary School, Smethwick, B66 1BA**

Thank you for your welcome and the help you gave when inspectors visited the school recently. Thank you for sharing your thoughts in conversations with us and through the questionnaire.

We were pleased to hear that you feel safe in school and you know how to keep yourselves safe. You told us that most of you like coming to school. Unfortunately we found that the school is not giving you a good enough education. You are not given the opportunity to learn enough in the Nursery and Reception classes, or in Year 1 and Year 2. Although most of you leave school in Year 6 with attainment in writing and mathematics that is at expected levels, many of you do not achieve as well in reading. You told us that sometimes you would like to work harder, and that sometimes work is too easy or too difficult. We agree with you. We have asked the school's leaders and governing body to work urgently on the following things.

- Improve your progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that all your lessons become good or better.
- Make sure that all school leaders share the responsibility to make learning more effective for you, and set you challenging targets that will lead to you making good or better progress.

You can all help by letting your teacher know whenever you think the work is too hard or too easy.

With all best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mary Hinds  
Lead inspector

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