

Pheasey Park Farm Primary School

Wimperis Way, Great Barr, Birmingham, B43 7LH

Inspection dates

31 October–1 November 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Teaching quality varies too much and is not typically good, particularly in some Year 1, Year 3 and Year 4 classes.
- Achievement in English and mathematics requires improvement. Pupils do not make consistently good progress in writing, especially boys. The more-able pupils are not challenged enough in mathematics.
- Lessons, especially in Years 1, 3 and 4, are often too dominated by the teacher, and this means that there are missed opportunities for pupils to think and learn for themselves. Learning activities in these years do not always challenge all pupils, especially those who are more able.
- Marking does not always help pupils to improve their work.
- Subject leaders miss opportunities to help other teachers improve lessons so that standards rise.
- Instability in the leadership of the school has meant that senior leaders have not checked the quality of teaching and learning robustly enough to inform training.
- The governing body does not consistently and thoroughly question senior leaders about the performance of teachers, especially when making decisions about any increases in teachers' salaries that are related to the standards that pupils achieve.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher, suitably supported by other senior leaders, has brought stability and drive for further improvement to the leadership and management of the school. Consequently, areas of weakness have been clearly identified and robust action taken to improve school outcomes as well as the quality of teaching.
- The quality of teaching is now being closely checked by senior leaders and teachers receive good guidance on how to improve lessons and pupils' learning. This is improving the quality of teaching.
- The rate at which pupils are learning is also accelerating, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress in reading.
- Pupils feel safe in school, behave well and are keen to learn.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 teachers and visited 48 lessons and part lessons. Three lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, senior leaders and teachers who have responsibility for different subjects, a group of pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the school’s documentation relating to safeguarding; the school’s self-evaluation and improvement plan; minutes recording governing body meetings; school assessments of pupils’ progress and the quality of work in pupils’ books.
- A number of pupils were heard reading and inspectors talked to them about their books.
- Responses from 45 parents and carers, who completed the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were received and their views were taken into account when inspectors made judgements.

Inspection team

James Henry, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Terry Payne	Additional Inspector
Tracey Kneale	Additional Inspector
Deborah Wring	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs who are supported at school action, school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and for pupils from service families, is below the national average.
- There is a children's centre on site that admits up to 450 children and their families each week. Provision is managed by the governing body. The quality of childcare is subject to a separate inspection.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics, by the end of Year 6.
- The acting headteacher was appointed in May 2012. The governing body has appointed a new headteacher who will join the school in January 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can do and by providing more interesting, challenging activities, especially for the more able
 - ensuring that pupils do not spend an unnecessary amount of time listening to teachers, particularly at the beginning of lessons, and settle quickly to work so that they can learn for themselves
 - ensuring that marking in all classes helps pupils to improve their work
 - ensuring that subject leaders regularly and thoroughly check on the quality of teaching and learning in classes and provide guidance to teachers on how to improve their lessons and then share good ideas with other staff to improve school outcomes.
- Raise standards in English by ensuring all pupils make good progress in writing, especially boys and those who are more able by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write in all subjects
 - ensuring writing opportunities consistently match the needs and interests of boys
 - ensuring writing activities are not too teacher directed, especially for more-able pupils.
- Raise standards in mathematics by ensuring all pupils make good progress by:
 - giving pupils a consistent method of tackling basic number calculations
 - ensuring pupils have plenty of opportunities to use their basic mathematics skills in different situations, especially when problem solving
 - ensuring pupils, especially the more able, are consistently challenged by providing more open-ended activities that allow them to investigate and learn for themselves.
- Strengthen the role of the governing body by:
 - ensuring governors regularly and thoroughly question senior leaders to ensure that all groups of pupils are doing as well as they can, especially those known to be eligible for the pupil premium
 - ensuring that governors regularly and thoroughly check on the quality of teaching and learning across the school and question senior leaders about the performance of teachers, especially

when making decisions about increases in teacher salaries.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement is not good because pupils, including disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs, do not make consistently good progress in writing and mathematics.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with basic skills that are broadly typical for their age. While some of the more-able children make good or better progress due to some good teaching, overall children enter Year 1 with skills that are meeting the expected levels for their age. Children make the expected progress given their original starting point.
- Overall, pupils make the expected progress across Key Stages 1 and 2 and leave Year 6 with attainment that is broadly average.
- Pupils generally make better progress in Year 2 than in Year 1. This results in some pupils, particularly the more able, having to catch up in their learning in Year 2, especially in their writing and mathematics.
- Progress in writing is inconsistent because writing activities tend to be too teacher directed, with not enough opportunities for pupils to write for different purposes in all subjects. Also, writing activities do not always fully interest boys and sufficiently stretch the more able.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is also variable because there is not a common approach across the school to help pupils tackle basic number calculations and use their mathematical skills in different situations, especially when problem solving. Also, more-able pupils are not sufficiently stretched and given enough opportunities to think, investigate and learn for themselves.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make adequate progress over time. Their progress in Years 5 and 6 is better than in Years 3 and Year 4 because teaching is better in these years. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lessons, pupils showed good concentration and made good progress in learning about fractions because activities were both challenging and interesting.
- Due to progress speeding up in Years 5 and Year 6, the achievement gap between pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium and all pupils nationally is starting to narrow.
- Although pupils' progress is still too variable, school assessments and observations of lessons show that pupils' progress is starting to accelerate and the rate of learning is increasing in writing and mathematics due to improvements in the quality of teaching.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching quality is very variable across the school and this means pupils' progress is also too inconsistent. For example, teaching and achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Year 2, Year 5 and Year 6 are generally better than in Year 1, Year 3 and Year 4.
- Most parents and carers think that their children are taught well. Pupils also say that they are generally taught well. While there is some effective teaching there is not enough that is good. Some of the pupils reported that they could be made to work harder. They also said that the teaching was getting better because they were beginning to be challenged more in lessons.
- Teaching is not typically good because not all teachers have high enough expectations about what pupils can achieve. Some teachers do not consistently set challenging enough tasks in lessons, especially to stretch more-able pupils.
- In some lessons teachers spend too long talking to pupils and it takes too long for the pupils to engage with the activities set. For example, on occasions, more-able pupils, instead of being quickly settled to work, sit and listen to the teacher explain what others are going to do in the lesson rather than starting on the activities planned.
- There are good aspects to teaching. For example, teachers listen carefully to pupils' answers to questions posed to assess their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Progress in reading is good. It is better than in writing and mathematics because the school has

a good system for teaching early reading skills and these skills are developed effectively as pupils get older.

- Teaching assistants are generally effective in ensuring disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have equal opportunities to learn and are engaged and involved in lessons so that they make at least expected progress and are not discriminated against. However, teachers do not always make the best use of teaching assistants during the introductory part of lessons.
- Some marking does make clear what must be improved. This said, marking is of variable quality and is better in some classes than in others.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Most parents and carers think that the school ensures that pupils are well behaved and that it deals effectively with bullying. Inspectors agree that behaviour is good and pupils are free from harassment. The school promotes good relations between adults and pupils and tackles incidents of discrimination effectively.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and secure in school. While there are occasional instances of bullying, mainly name calling, teachers deal with any problems quickly and effectively. The acting headteacher has introduced a more thorough system for checking and dealing with instances of bullying and, as a result, pupils say that behaviour has improved.
- Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe because of the success of initiatives such as talking about safety on the internet, informing pupils how to keep safe on the roads and avoiding local canals.
- Pupils are keen to learn and are respectful to adults and each other. There is very little disruption to learning in lessons. Exclusions are rare. Only one pupil has been excluded for a short period of time during the past few years.
- There are good relationships between staff and pupils. Teachers use a balance of rewards for good behaviour and appropriate sanctions, if necessary, to ensure pupils behave well.
- Staff who act as learning mentors help disabled pupils well, and those with special educational needs, to deal with any emotional problems that may arise. Mentors ensure that these pupils are appropriately involved in school life and in activities in the wider community.
- The school has successfully improved attendance and punctuality. Consequently, attendance is now above the national average for primary schools. Almost all pupils arriving on time for the start of the day. There are some families who take holidays during term time and this is an issue which the school has not fully addressed.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- There has been instability in the leadership of the school and this has meant that the monitoring of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress has not been as thorough as it should have been. As a result, weaknesses in teaching and learning have not always been pinpointed quickly enough and action taken rapidly to address shortcomings in teaching quality to ensure pupils make good gains in learning not average ones.
- In a short period of time, the acting headteacher, supported by other senior leaders, has brought stability to the school and a new sense of drive and ambition. Improved evaluation of the school's work has identified accurately areas of weakness and action has been taken to improving teaching. Pupils' progress is starting to accelerate in some subjects. Initiatives to improve pupils' reading skills have been successful in raising standards in the subject.
- Teaching and learning in lessons are now being thoroughly checked. Good guidance is given to teachers on how to improve their lessons and the advice is being effectively put into practice. While teaching and learning in lessons remain inconsistent in quality, the improvements in teaching are speeding up the rate at which pupils learn, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Senior leaders are tracking pupils' progress as part of managing the performance of teachers.

This includes ensuring teachers are effective in their work and earn the right for any increase in salary.

- The progress of free school meals pupils is well tracked by senior leaders. Pupil premium money is used to employ an extra member of staff to help those who may be falling behind. The money is being appropriately targeted and the performance of free school meals pupils is improving so that the gap between their performance and that of all pupils nationally is starting to close
- The curriculum satisfactorily promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Visits to museums, places of worship and residential visits, along with specialist music and modern foreign language teaching, help pupils gain an understanding of their own and other cultures. There is a lack of a coordinated approach to the development of pupils' personal skills in all of the subjects taught.
- The local authority has provided good support to the school during the period of instability in leadership. It carried out a review of how well the school was performing and provided appropriate support to bring about improvements in leadership and teaching. Consequently, the school is working with the support of specialist English and mathematics consultants. As a result, teachers are beginning to plan lessons that are more effective in meeting the needs of pupils in these subjects.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors meet their responsibility in setting targets for managing the performance of the headteacher. The governing body, while supportive, has not regularly and thoroughly questioned senior leaders about the performance of other staff. Therefore, they do not always have an accurate independent view of the performance of teachers and other staff to inform decisions about increases in salaries. While governors know that pupil premium funding is used to employ an extra member of staff to help improve the performance of those entitled to free school meals, they do not question robustly enough what impact the funding is having on raising standards, and the extent to which there is a narrowing of the gap between the performance of those pupils eligible for free school meals and that of all pupils nationally. While the governing body has not always been robust enough in monitoring the performance of the school, it has acted successfully to address the instability in leadership and management. The governing body quickly appointed an acting headteacher when the need arose and suitably brokered support with the local authority to bring help and drive improvement. Governors have worked closely with current senior leaders to gain a more accurate view of the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils. While this work is at an early stage of development, it has led to the governing body calling leaders and teachers to account for school outcomes.

What inspection judgements mean

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

School details

Unique reference number	104219
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	402937

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	697
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ray Wright
Acting Headteacher	Susan Nation
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2008
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