

Yorkmead Junior and Infant School

York Road, Hall Green, Birmingham, B28 8BB

Inspection dates

20–21 March 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The leaders and governing body run the school well, with a strong focus on improving the performance of teachers. This explains why the school is improving rapidly.
- Pupils achieve well and make particularly good progress in reading and writing.
- Good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching means that pupils do well in all year groups. Lessons move at a fast pace and pupils say that teachers make learning fun.
- Pupils' good behaviour makes an important contribution to their learning. Bullying is very rare. Pupils listen carefully in lessons and get on quickly with their work.
- Parents rightly feel that the school cares for their children well so that they feel very safe.
- The stimulating and well-organised provision for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage gives them a good start to school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in mathematics is not as fast as in English. Pupils have too few opportunities to use their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Variations in the quality of teaching mean that pupils do better in some classes than others.
- The poor attendance by a small minority of pupils affects their progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 30 lessons, of which three were joint observations with senior leaders. The inspectors also made a number of brief visits to other lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, senior and subject leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to gain the views of parents and carers, but the inspectors talked with some during the inspection.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents, including the school’s own data on pupils’ progress, planning and monitoring files, behaviour records and documents relating to attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Terry Elston, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Joanne Sanchez-Thompson

Additional Inspector

Susan Lewis

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much larger-than-average primary school.
- A very high proportion of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and speak English as an additional language.
- A high proportion of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. This provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those with a parent in the armed services.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expected for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that progress in mathematics matches that in English by:
 - giving more opportunities for pupils to practise their number skills in all subjects
 - providing training to ensure that all teachers have the skills to teach mathematics well
 - ensuring that teachers give pupils more practice at solving mathematical problems.
- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that the work for pupils is always challenging yet achievable
 - checking on pupils' progress during the lesson to help those who are stuck or have finished early.
- Improve attendance, particularly by younger pupils and those eligible for free school meals, by checking carefully on the attendance of all groups of pupils and taking prompt action to reduce unnecessary absences.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress from starting points on entry to the school that are well below those typical of their age group. Pupils, as well as their parents, are right to believe they do well at school. Attainment at both key stages has improved markedly over the last three years and current attainment by pupils in both Year 2 and Year 6 continues this upward trend.
- Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make particularly good progress in their language skills. Adults provide many opportunities for children to talk about their work and use words carefully to ensure they understand. Children enjoy their work and thrive on tasks such as acting as 'shape detectives' and searching for squares and triangles outside. Good teaching of phonics (building letter sounds into words) helps pupils to make a good start at reading, and they will often pick up a book to read for pleasure.
- Pupils build well on this start in Key Stage 1, and attainment by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics is in line with the national average. They have good opportunities to improve their phonic skills and many tackle unfamiliar words with confidence. They write well and work hard to form their letters correctly. In mathematics, pupils count accurately and enjoy practical opportunities to use money to 'buy' toys from a shop. When tackling problems, however, they sometimes find it hard to work out what the questions mean and, for example, arrive at the answer of eight when asked to investigate four lots of four.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in English is average. Pupils make good progress in writing, both in English lessons and in other subjects; for example, when describing living conditions in Victorian times in history or the features of different planets in science. Pupils read well and accurately, and a good number of more-able pupils confidently use books and computers to skim texts to gain information quickly.
- In mathematics, attainment by the end of Year 6 is average. Pupils know their multiplication tables well and most calculate quickly in their heads. As in Key Stage 1, however, many struggle when asked to do investigations that require them to work out what the question means. Once the teacher has helped them, they use their good number skills to solve the problem. Although pupils have some opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in science, this rarely happens in other subjects.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress, and their parents say how well teachers and teaching assistants help their children succeed. These pupils benefit from good support in lessons, yet have opportunities to work on their own when necessary.
- The many pupils who speak English as an additional language do well in all subjects. They listen carefully, and quickly learn to speak clearly. However, while they talk easily to one another, even the oldest ones lack confidence to talk to the whole class because they have too little practice. For example, sometimes when explaining how they have arrived at an answer, they have to keep repeating themselves until others can hear.
- In Year 6 in 2012, pupils eligible for the pupil premium were the equivalent of a little over two terms behind their classmates in English and mathematics but the gap is closing. The school makes good use of the designated funds to provide extra reading and number lessons, individual tuition and one-to-two sessions

The quality of teaching is good

- In typical lessons, teachers make it clear to pupils what they are expected to learn. Teachers save time by getting pupils to stick these targets into their books. Teachers remind pupils of these learning goals to ensure that they are on track to achieve them.
- Teachers set high standards for behaviour, and pupils respond well by listening carefully and getting quickly down to work. Pupils always put their hands up to answer a question and listen carefully when others are answering.
- Teachers mark pupils' work promptly with helpful comments to help them improve. Pupils value this guidance, and subsequent work shows that they take good note of the teacher's advice. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults maintain excellent records of children's progress in 'learning journals' that parents value highly as examples of their children's achievements.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. In the large majority of lessons, the teachers plan tasks that match pupils' abilities and ensure that they have every opportunity to ask and answer questions.
- The teaching of English is consistently good and sometimes outstanding, which is why pupils make such good progress in both reading and writing. Daily phonics sessions from the Nursery class onwards ensure that pupils are confident when tackling new words. Teachers are very good at stimulating pupils in their writing. One class achieved very well, for example, when producing autobiographies that provided a perceptive insight into their lives so far.
- In mathematics, teachers are mostly very good at teaching basic number skills. The regular mental mathematics sessions, in addition to those in numeracy lessons, do much to speed up pupils' calculations. Not all teachers, however, have the skills to develop pupils' problem-solving skills to the full and the pupils continue to struggle.
- On the few occasions when learning is steady rather than good, the work set is too hard for some and too easy for others. This can hamper progress, particularly when the teacher does not check on pupils' work until towards the end of the lesson.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is good and often outstanding. They enter classrooms punctually and settle quickly down to work. They are always courteous and share ideas well in class and small-group discussions.
 - Pupils show a good awareness of all forms of bullying and know that adults handle any instances of unacceptable behaviour well. They are careful when using the internet and speak knowledgeably about its potential dangers.
 - Pupils have a good awareness of different faiths, gained through regular lessons and visits to places of worship representing a wide range of beliefs. They respect the way others celebrate their religion. Any form of racism is rare.
 - Pupils take responsibility eagerly, and develop their leadership qualities well by taking part in the
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school council and acting as helpers to children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils play an important role in improving their local community by, for example, picking up litter, weeding areas and helping grow vegetables in an allotment. As one pupil said, 'I enjoy helping people, but I also like helping my community.'

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn the rules for good behaviour quickly and show maturity as they choose activities for themselves. They persevere well with their tasks and cooperate well with one another.
- While the vast majority of pupils attend regularly a few, notably younger ones and some of those known to be eligible for free school meals, have too many absences and this affects their progress.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is highly respected by all members of the school community for the way she leads improvements at a sensible pace. There is a very good sense of teamwork in school. Many staff who completed the inspection questionnaire commented on how proud they are to work alongside colleagues towards such ambitious goals.
 - The school has made good improvements since the last inspection, particularly in the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment. The leaders' accurate self-evaluation and action to rectify weaknesses show that the school has the capacity to do even better.
 - The good systems to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning provide teachers and teaching assistants with clear guidance on how to raise attainment. Annual reviews of teachers' performance arising from observations of their lessons are rigorous and provide challenging targets for their development.
 - Support for newly qualified teachers is good, both from the senior leaders and fellow teachers, and they speak highly of the way this has helped them to improve their teaching.
 - The school shows a determination to provide equal opportunities for all pupils and staff, and the recent work to raise girls' achievement in mathematics is proving successful. However, while the leaders do much to improve attendance generally, they do too little to check on different groups such as pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and younger ones who have too many absences.
 - The school has fruitful links with other schools that enables the leaders to learn from each other's best practice. These links have been particularly helpful recently in ensuring that teachers' assessments of the levels of pupils' work are accurate.
 - Safeguarding systems are robust and meet all requirements. These are reviewed regularly and valued highly by pupils as well as parents.
 - The school has done much over recent years to develop strong links with parents. They feel well informed about the school's work and say how much they enjoy attending events that tell them, for example, how reading is taught and how the school is building a 'creative curriculum' where pupils work at topics that embrace all subjects.
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- The school provides a balanced range of interesting activities that help to make learning fun. The recent additional focus on improving pupils' literacy skills has proved effective, particularly in the way pupils use their reading and writing in all subjects.
 - This is less the case in mathematics, and the school has rightly identified the need to include more number work in the topics.
 - The school does much to encourage pupils to reflect on issues such as the wonders of nature and the importance of considering each other's feelings. They gain a good sense of right and wrong and discuss moral issues with maturity.
 - The school has made good use of the expertise from the local authority to raise the quality of teaching and learning, but this support has been reduced as the school improved.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses, including its performance compared with other schools, gained through regular visits and meetings with the headteacher and subject leaders. Governors have the knowledge to challenge the leaders and they take a full part in school improvement. They are closely involved in the evaluation of teachers' performance and the decisions about their pay and promotion. Governors have benefitted from useful training based clearly on their needs. They have a good awareness of the school's budget and know how the funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent, why it is allocated in this way and the positive impact it has on their academic achievement. The governors, however, have not identified the need to direct the funds at improving attendance of disadvantaged pupils.
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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	103284
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	404865

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	460
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barbara Marsh
Headteacher	Helen Dunnico
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2011
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