

# Featherstone Primary School

Glenville Drive, Birmingham, B23 6PR

**Inspection dates** 28–29 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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

- Pupils do not achieve as well as they could and standards by the end of Year 6 are not as high as they should be, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- Not enough pupils make enough progress to make up for some weak learning in the past.
- There is too much variation in the quality of teaching to ensure consistently good learning.
- Teachers do not always take full account of the range of pupils' abilities and do not match tasks to pupils' previous learning well enough.
- In some lessons, pupils do not have enough time to practise what they have learned.
- Pupils are not always clear about how to improve their work because marking does not show them.
- Teachers' explanations of new work and the questions they ask are sometimes too complicated so pupils do not grasp new ideas quickly.
- Because of the high number of staff changes since the previous inspection, senior leaders have not yet had enough impact on improving the quality of teaching.
- Information from the school's rigorous tracking of pupils' progress is not used well enough in teachers' planning to make sure that pupils make good progress.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children get a good start to their education in the Reception Year, where they make good progress in all areas of learning.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium make good progress and are closing the gap between their attainment and that of others.
- Pupils read accurately and with clear understanding.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They enjoy school and feel safe.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes well to their positive attitudes and good behaviour.
- Governors have recently reviewed their work and, as a result, provide good support, strong challenge and are involved in school life.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons. Five lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and looked at the work in their books.
- Meetings were held with governors, senior leaders and pupils. An inspector made telephone calls to a representative of the local authority and the school's improvement partner.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including the school's own judgements on its strengths and weaknesses, and the data it collects on pupils' progress. Documents detailing the school's arrangements for safeguarding were reviewed.
- The inspector took account of the 27 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View.
- The inspection team took account of 25 responses to the staff inspection questionnaire.

## Inspection team

David Speakman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Roisin Chambers

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- A large majority of pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average. A few are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average. This is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- A greater than average proportion of pupils joins or leaves the school during the school year.
- The school is part of the local authority's expansion programme to create more primary school places in the city. Currently the Reception Year and Year 1 have two classes and other year groups all have one class. The school will have two classes in each year group by 2018.
- Since the previous inspection:
  - the headteacher has been permanently appointed to his post from an acting role
  - a new deputy headteacher has been appointed
  - new senior leadership and senior management teams have been formed
  - new buildings have been completed to accommodate the Early Years Foundation Stage and the school's expansion
  - four new teachers have been appointed and two additional teachers have been appointed to Reception and Year 1 to cover the school's growing intake.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good in all classes to improve achievement and raise standards by:
  - ensuring that all tasks are matched accurately to pupils' abilities and build only on secure previous learning, especially in mathematics
  - allowing enough time for pupils to practise new learning and consolidate new skills
  - improving the marking of pupils' work so that the feedback they receive is always effective in helping them move on in their learning
  - making sure that questions are pitched at the right level and explanations are clear so pupils understand new learning better.
- Increase the impact of senior leadership on the work of the school by:
  - strengthening senior leaders' contributions to checking and improving teaching
  - making sure teachers use tracking information more effectively so that pupils make consistently good progress in all year groups.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- In general, pupils do not make good progress and do not achieve the standards of which they are capable. This is because teaching is not yet good enough to help pupils make up for weaknesses in learning from the past.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 are broadly average. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment has been typically around the national average over time but fell in 2013 to below average in mathematics and writing. This was because teachers have only recently started using new, detailed tracking data in planning their lessons and work was not matched well enough to pupils' abilities. In reading, attainment was average.
- More-able pupils did not perform as well as they should have in the national tests in 2013. The proportions achieving the higher Level 5 or above in writing or in mathematics were below average. Pupils' achievement in mathematics and in writing did not match the national rate of achievement.
- There has been significant disruption to pupils' learning since the previous inspection, with many staff changes. This has led to inconsistencies in pupils' learning. Inspection evidence shows weaknesses in pupils' basic knowledge and understanding, particularly in mathematics. Some pupils are unsure of basic number facts and this leads to some unnecessary mistakes.
- Pupils join Reception Year with attainment that is below that typical for their age, especially in communication and personal, social and emotional development. They have limited vocabulary and find simple counting challenging. Observations, assessment data and children's 'learning journey' folders show good progress, particularly in personal, social and emotional development, numeracy, writing and reading. Attainment on transfer to Year 1 is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening (letters and the sounds they make) check matches the national percentage. Reading is consistently strong in this school. Pupils read well; the more able read fluently, with expression and accuracy. Others have good strategies to work out unfamiliar words. Older pupils are confident readers. They talk with understanding about the characters they are reading about.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs was below average and not as good as the same group nationally. However, some have complex needs, including for behaviour, and they make good progress towards meeting their own personal targets. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress once they have acquired enough English to access learning.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium make better progress than others in the school. Leaders, managers and governors are successfully closing the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils. The attainment gap closed in reading and mathematics, but was about two terms behind in writing.
- This year, pupils' progress since the beginning of Key Stage 2 is improving but is still not yet good. They are making expected progress in writing and mathematics and their attainment is in line with that nationally expected for their age. Progress in reading is currently good and attainment is above national expectations.

**The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not good enough to secure good achievement for pupils throughout the school. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection varied too much. This means that pupils' progress is not consistently good as they move through the school.
- Teachers do not always take sufficient account of pupils' previous learning when planning lessons. Work is too often pitched at a level beyond pupils' capabilities. Teachers have not sufficiently checked beforehand how secure pupils basic skills are, for example in numeracy. Pupils struggle and have difficulty in moving onto the next steps in learning due to insecure basic skills.
- Teachers' explanations are often unclear and sometimes over-complicated. They do not simplify new learning enough for pupils to understand fresh ideas and procedures. As a result pupils find difficulty in keeping up and, as they are given too little time in some lessons to practise, new learning is fragile. On occasions, teachers continue to develop ideas when it is clear that some pupils are struggling.
- Occasionally, teachers check pupils' understanding by asking for a show of hands, giving an insecure idea of how well pupils are doing. Questioning of pupils does not always probe learning deeply enough as the questions asked lack focus.
- Marking and feedback do not always identify how pupils should improve their work. There is some high quality marking, which tells pupils what they have done well and what they need to do next. However, this quality is not common to all marking.
- Teaching assistants are usually deployed efficiently. They support groups of pupils, mainly the less able and those with special educational needs with work that is at an appropriate level and using methods that meet pupils' individual needs well.
- At its best, teaching promotes good or better progress. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Work is pitched at an appropriate yet challenging level for pupils of all levels of attainment, especially the more able. Lessons move at a quick and sometimes rapid pace, resulting in pupils learning quickly. Teachers make a point of helping pupils correct any misunderstandings so they are in a strong position to take the next steps in learning.
- Teaching in Reception is good, both when teachers lead groups of children in learning and when children choose activities for themselves. During child-initiated learning, adults set out a wide range of activities, based on a theme and linked to the full range of children's skills. They encourage independence. In taught sessions, they use questioning effectively to involve and engage children.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are proud when they achieve good results. When given the opportunity, they work well in groups and listen to others' ideas respectfully. They are keen to do well and show care in their presentation of work in books. They sit patiently, even when teachers' introductions are overly long or explanations complicated.
- Pupils say behaviour is good and that it has improved. Staff and parent questionnaires agree and

this was confirmed by inspection observations. When pupils are allowed to take responsibility for their own learning, such as making suggestions when planning their topic work, behaviour can be excellent. This does not happen often enough so pupils do not develop the ability to learn on their own or develop the confidence to take the next steps in learning independently. Because of this, behaviour is not outstanding.

- Pupils are safe in school. They say bullying is not an issue and they feel that if it ever did happen, it would be dealt with quickly. Pupils know about bullying, how to avoid it and the different forms it can take. Sensitive support is provided by specialist support staff for pupils who have additional needs and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- Pupils contribute well to the life of the school. They take responsibility seriously. They regularly make suggestions to staff about what they would like to happen and because staff take these suggestions seriously, pupils have a positive impact on school life. They are successful in raising money for a range of charities.
- Attendance has improved but is still below average. Most pupils now come to school on time so the school day can start smoothly. The school has appointed a pastoral and family support manager, whose work is having a significant impact on improving attendance.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- Leadership and management require improvement because newly developed monitoring systems and procedures have not yet had enough impact on improving achievement. There have been many staff changes during the last two years, including at senior leadership level. This has slowed the rate of school improvement.
- Senior leaders have set priorities for improving the quality of education and hence pupils' achievement. They have a detailed view of the school's work which draws on an appropriate range of evidence and forms the basis of the school improvement plan. Their evaluation of pupils' achievement is accurate, but those for teaching, the quality of leadership and management and the schools' overall effectiveness are generous.
- There are appropriate procedures to manage the performance of staff, and the governors have set demanding targets for the work of staff. Because of the number of staff changes, procedures are newly implemented for a number of teachers. Challenging targets are closely monitored to guide the work of staff and improve their performance. Feedback to teachers by senior leaders is comprehensive but does not always clearly identify what needs improving.
- Carefully structured plans develop the leadership skills of staff to support the work of the senior leadership team. Established leaders, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, English, mathematics and the manager of the pupil premium funding, do their jobs well. The impact of their work can be seen in good or improving outcomes currently seen in school. With the absence of the coordinator, provision for special educational needs is being effectively managed with the support of the local authority.
- Since being in post, senior leaders have been successful in improving some areas and are showing the capacity to improve. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved; the quality of education has been maintained in the light of significant staffing changes; behaviour has improved and attendance is rising.
- While new tracking systems for pupils' progress have been developed, teachers are not using the

information effectively enough to plan work at the right level that helps pupils to make good progress.

- The curriculum is planned to meet pupils' needs. There is a focus on reading, writing and mathematics. The curriculum generally gives pupils equal access to learning opportunities.
- Funds are managed well. Pupil-premium funding is appropriately directed to support the progress of eligible pupils and to include them in the school's activities. There are detailed arrangements for allocating the primary school sport funding to improve and widen opportunities for more pupils to take part in sports activities and improve teachers' expertise in teaching gymnastics, sports and games. The school has plans to measure the impact of this work.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved. Pupils have a wide range of cultural experiences. Moral and social development is strong and pupils have good opportunities to develop a spiritual dimension through considering others and valuing their own and others' achievements.
- A representative of the local authority has joined with the school in checking pupil progress. The support provided is adequate and appropriate.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are ambitious for the school and keen to support and challenge. Through a training programme, governors now have a better understanding of performance data. They understand governors' roles and responsibilities better. They are aware of how to identify their own strengths and weaknesses and how to tackle weaknesses. Governors have recently conducted a review of their own performance. They have identified areas they need to improve and are acting on the recommendations. This included an audit of their individual and collective skills and a reorganisation of their work so they have a greater involvement in school life. They know the school well through their own checks and regular visits so are in a strong position to challenge and ask searching questions. They have recently challenged school leaders in relation to its academic performance, posing very challenging questions in relation to the latest set of assessment data. Individual governors are attached to year groups and to improvement initiatives. As a result, governors have a good knowledge of the quality of teaching and learning. Governors have regular contact and discuss whole-school targets for improvement. They have helped manage the performance of teachers in a bid to improve teaching, linking pay to responsibility and competence but staff changes mean a slow rate of progress in this area. Governors make sure statutory requirements are met, including for safeguarding.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103318
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	426929

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	248
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sylvia MacFarlane
<b>Headteacher</b>	Edris Gaibee
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	06 December 2011
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