

Galton Valley Primary School

Brasshouse Lane, Smethwick, B66 1BA

Inspection dates 11–12 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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.

- Pupils make good progress from their different starting points and achievement is good.
- Most teaching is good and some is outstanding. In the very best lessons, expectations are high and all pupils are given a good balance of challenge and support.
- Leaders ensure that outstanding teaching is shared effectively with other staff so all are clear about the practices that accelerate pupils' progress.
- Pupils' positive attitudes and their good behaviour make a strong contribution to their learning.
- Positive relationships at all levels help pupils to feel safe.
- The school provides a safe and harmonious environment where pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively.
- The headteacher's drive and determination have ensured that previous weaknesses have been successfully addressed. All leaders share the same resolve to provide a good education for all pupils.
- The governing body is effective in challenging leaders about aspects of their work. The governors provide good support, and their regular visits enable them to find out for themselves how well the school is improving.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching, and teachers do not always challenge the more-able pupils enough in lessons.
- In mathematics, pupils' number skills have improved recently but not all pupils are competent at quickly recalling key number facts.
- Pupils use their literacy skills well in other subjects, but do not have such extensive opportunities to practise their numeracy skills.
- Improvement plans are detailed but do not have clear success criteria linked to when actions will be completed, so leaders are not able to precisely monitor the progress made.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 33 lessons, five of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, staff and pupils. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, records of meetings of the governing body, assessment information and curriculum planning. Work in pupils' books and displays around the school were examined. The inspectors listened to groups of pupils read and observed the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make).
- Inspectors took account of the 89 responses to a recent questionnaire sent to parents to gain their views about the school's performance. The 47 responses to a staff questionnaire were also considered.

Inspection team

Lois Furness, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Geoffrey Lawrence

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- Galton Valley is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above average. This additional government funding is provided for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, from service families or looked after by the local authority.
- Although the proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs at school action is below average, the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- Approximately two-thirds of the pupils are Bangladeshi, with around one third from a range of other ethnic backgrounds and heritages. The vast majority of pupils speak English as their additional language.
- The number of pupils joining and leaving the school partway through their education is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Over the past two years there have been considerable staffing changes including the appointment of two deputy headteachers, one of whom is also the phonics leader, an assistant headteacher and a 'learning' leader.
- The deputy headteacher at the time of the previous inspection has left for one term to help a primary school in Walsall.
- When the school was last inspected in February 2012, it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. An inspector has subsequently visited the school on four occasions to monitor its progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching so that more is outstanding and progress continues to accelerate, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that the more-able pupils are always given the challenge and support they need
 - implementing strategies that will speed up pupils' quick recall of number facts
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to practise their numeracy skills in different contexts
 - continuing to share the outstanding practice within the school with other members of staff.
- Make school improvement planning more effective by including ongoing success criteria, linked to specific dates by which actions will be completed.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Progress is accelerating quickly and, given pupils' starting points, achievement is good. This positive picture is a result of decisions taken by the headteacher and senior leaders that have raised expectations for pupils and improved teaching over the last two years. Current progress data show that, over the last two years, progress has been good in all year groups.
- When children first start in the Nursery, their skills are low. Although they make good gains in all aspects of their learning, the proportion achieving a good level of development by the time they start Year 1 has been well below average. However, this is improving and more children are currently on track to attain a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year.
- In Key Stage 1, good progress continues. Expectations have been raised and, when improvement is needed, action is taken. This is evident in the response to the well below-average 2012 results in the Year 1 national phonics screening check. Swift action led to results in 2013 rising to average.
- In Year 2, standards are steadily improving. In 2013, they were average in reading and writing. In mathematics, although an average proportion of pupils attained the expected level, too few pupils attained the higher level. Given pupils' well below-average starting points on entry to Year 1, achievement is good overall.
- Attainment in reading is steadily improving, following a dip in 2013 when the vast majority of Year 6 pupils attained the expected level but too few attained above this level. Current assessments show that more pupils are working at and above age-related expectations than in the past. Pupils are enthusiastic about reading. They speak knowledgeably about different authors such as William Shakespeare.
- In the new English grammar, punctuation and spelling test for Year 6 pupils, attainment in 2013 was broadly average. Pupils' written work in other subjects shows that they apply these skills competently, especially in Years 5 and 6. Writing attainment is broadly in line with age-related expectations, and an increasing number of pupils are on track to attain the higher level.
- In mathematics, attainment is rising as a result of a strong focus on improving pupils' number skills, including mental calculations. However, some pupils do not instantly recall key number facts, including multiplication tables, and this slows their progress. Also work in books in subjects other than mathematics shows that pupils do not have enough opportunity to practise their skills in other contexts.
- Disabled pupils, those who have other special educational needs and the high proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language make progress in line with other pupils. They benefit from the good support of teaching assistants. Although the progress of the more-able pupils is good overall, it slows at times when they are set work which lacks challenge.
- The progress of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium is good. They reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are slightly higher than those of similar pupils nationally and close to those of others in the school. They achieve well because the funding has been spent on extra time for adults to work with such pupils and the purchase of resources to supplement teaching.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is usually good and sometimes outstanding. This has a direct effect on the improving progress and attainment of pupils. The work in pupils' books and the school's records of the checks made on teaching show that teaching is typically good and improving. Typical of the strengths in teaching are good relationships. This results in pupils being keen to learn and having the confidence, for example, to generate discussions about their work.
- In the best lessons observed, pupils made excellent progress and thoroughly enjoyed their learning. Teachers used every opportunity to deepen all pupils' ideas through skilful questioning and well-chosen activities. This was seen in Year 6 as pupils wrote interesting and good-quality biographies of famous people. Senior leaders recognise that not enough of this high-quality teaching is routine throughout the school.
- Reading is taught well, with a good emphasis on the teaching of phonics combined with a range of reading techniques. This was seen in a Reception session, when children enthusiastically applied their knowledge of phonics to successfully read new words and write short sentences.
- In all lessons observed, pupils were aware of what they were expected to learn and how they might achieve success. They say this knowledge helps them to learn better. Work is generally pitched at an appropriate level because lessons are based on accurate information about what the pupils already know and can do. However, at times, the activities set for more-able pupils are not demanding enough to ensure that they make consistently good progress.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning. They support pupils with confidence and use their initiative well to judge when and how to support individual pupils, including those with additional needs.
- Marking is of a good quality in all subjects. Pupils receive good guidance on strengths and clear pointers for improvement. Pupils enjoy the 'gap tasks' where they have the opportunity to respond to, and act upon, the marking and advice that they receive.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' attitudes to school and their work have improved since the last inspection. This is having a good effect on the progress they make.
- A strong emphasis is placed on the importance of good behaviour from when children first start at school in the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result, pupils quickly accept teachers' expectations of behaviour in lessons and around school.
- Behaviour in lessons is good and pupils usually apply themselves well to their work. Their books show that they take great pride in their work and try hard to present it neatly. Pupils' homework books or 'learning logs' provide good evidence of books where pupils do their best work. They listen well to their teachers' instructions in lessons and, when given the opportunity, they work successfully with a partner or as a group listening carefully to each other's ideas. Just occasionally, if the work is not challenging enough, they can lose interest.
- Pupils feel safe in school, saying they know that if they have any problem, help is always on hand. Parents agree their children are kept safe. Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying. They say that there is no bullying in their school, but acknowledge that there are instances of falling out. They are

confident that these are dealt with quickly and effectively by the adults in school.

- Pupils with additional learning, health, social or language needs are included in everything on offer and are supported extremely well. Staff work productively with a range of agencies to ensure that support is directed appropriately to the pupils who need it.
- The school's strong commitment to equal opportunities is evidenced by the support it provides to its vulnerable pupils and their families. Effective guidance is given to families where pupils may be at risk of poor attendance and, as a result, attendance is in line with the national average.

The leadership and management are good

- The strong leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by the other senior leaders, has ensured that previous weaknesses have been successfully rectified. This capable senior leadership team has a clear view of what needs to be done next to make the school even better, and has demonstrated the capacity to do it. All staff who have leadership responsibilities make strong contributions to school improvement and are positive role models for their colleagues.
- Systems for checking on pupils' progress are robust and give staff regular information about how well every pupil is doing. This enables leaders to identify any pupil who may be underachieving and quickly support them. So far, this has had the strongest impact on helping pupils of lower and average ability to make improved progress. Work is under way to ensure that more-able pupils are consistently given the work they need to reach the higher levels of attainment.
- Regular checks are made on the quality and impact of teaching. Senior staff are involved in assisting the headteacher in this task, and staff work together well and share good practice. A good programme of training for all staff, including teaching assistants, is helping to keep their skills sharp and up to date. Leaders are aware of the need to continue this good practice in order to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in the school.
- Leaders in charge of subjects, the 'learning leader', phonics leader and special educational needs coordinator, all provide good leadership. They know the strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility and have good action plans to secure improvement. However, these plans and the school improvement plan lack ongoing success criteria linked to dates when actions will be completed, so leaders are not able to frequently and accurately monitor the progress made.
- Financial management is good and pupil premium funding is used appropriately to support the progress of qualifying pupils and to ensure equality of opportunity. Leaders have considered carefully how the new primary school sport funding should be used. The school is investing in improving the skills of its own staff in teaching sport as well as using skilled coaches in dance, including ballet, for example. It is too soon to evaluate the impact of this funding on improving pupils' achievement.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through a wide range of visits and visitors. Music and drama are given a high priority, and during the inspection, Year 6 pupils very competently performed *The Tempest*. They were very proud to tell inspectors how they had recently performed this play at The Old Rep in Birmingham.
- The local authority has appropriately been carrying out a monitoring role over the last year as the school's own capacity to instigate improvement has become stronger and more sustainable. However, leaders know that if any help is needed, additional support is available.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors have faced numerous challenges over the last two years. They have made some difficult decisions and made some astute staff and senior appointments to ensure effective leadership and good-quality teaching. This means they have realised their goal of achieving the good overall effectiveness of the school.
- Regular reviews and comparisons of data on pupils' progress give governors a clear overview of pupils' performance. They are able to hold leaders to account and to ask searching questions from a well-informed standpoint. For example, when subject leaders request funding for resources, they have to meet with governors during the next term and explain how this resource is improving pupils' learning.
- Governors ensure that the pupil premium funding is spent wisely; for example, on providing additional individual or small-group support for pupils who need it. They keep a regular check on the impact of this expenditure on the learning and progress of this group of pupils.
- Governors ensure that the systems for managing staff performance are robust, and they are fully aware of the link between the achievement of these targets and salary progression.
- Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet all current requirements, and attend training on safer recruitment and child protection to ensure they know what is expected of them.

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	135288
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	424301

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	495
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jackie Price
Headteacher	Sarah O'Boyle
Date of previous school inspection	29 February 2012
Telephone number	0121 558 1690
Fax number	0121 558 1696
Email address	sarah.oboyle1@gvps.sandwell.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

