

Colmers Farm Infant School

Leybrook Road, Birmingham, B45 9PB

Inspection dates 5–6 June 2014

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.

- All pupils make good progress and achieve well. Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics has improved greatly since the previous inspection and is now good.
- Children make a good start to learning in Reception because teaching is never less than good, and often outstanding.
- Teaching is good across the school with some outstanding practice. Teachers use information about pupils' progress well to plan learning at the right level for different groups so that all pupils make good progress.
- Teachers provide helpful written and spoken advice on how pupils can improve their work.
- Teaching assistants are highly skilled and make a valuable contribution to pupils' good achievement.
- Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for by adults in school.
- Pupils are provided with many opportunities in lessons and after school to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils are polite and respectful to adults and to each other. They are keen to learn and take great pride in their work.
- The school's determination to promote good attendance has brought about rapid improvements recently so that, currently, attendance is above the latest national average data.
- The school is well led by the headteacher. She has introduced changes which have improved the quality of teaching and raised pupils' achievement. She is very well supported by other leaders, and all of the staff.
- Governors know the school well and provide the right balance of support and challenge. They have contributed greatly to the improvements that have been made since the previous inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to ensure pupils make even more rapid progress. Outstanding practice in teaching is not always shared across the school.
- Very occasionally, teachers do not check closely how well pupils are learning and do not modify work during lessons when necessary to maintain pupils' rate of progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 part lessons taught by seven teachers, five of which were observed jointly with senior staff. A number of other lessons were visited to sample the quality of marking of pupils' work, their progress over time, and the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make).
- Inspectors examined pupils' books, talked to pupils about their work and heard them read. They observed other aspects of the school day, including: an assembly, pupils' behaviour at break and lunchtime, and their arrival and departure from the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other leaders and two groups of pupils. A meeting took place with three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. A meeting was held separately with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 10 parents who responded to Parent View, the online questionnaire, the school's own parental survey, and 18 responses to the staff questionnaire. They spoke to parents at the start of the school day.
- A wide range of documents was reviewed, including the school's own data on pupils' current attainment and progress, its self-evaluation and development plan, information about the management of staff performance and training arrangements, monitoring of teaching, pupils' behaviour and attendance, the safeguarding of pupils and minutes of the governing body's meetings.

Inspection team

Ann Behan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Pitt

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Colmers Farm Infant School is a smaller than average-sized school of its type. It shares a building with Colmers Farm Junior School, and is on the same site as Rubery Nursery which is a local authority controlled nursery.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage of the school is made up of two Reception classes.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, the proportion who speak English as an additional language and those who are at an early stage in learning English are well-below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in care, is almost twice the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well-above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is also well-above average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching, so that all pupils make more rapid progress, by making sure that:
 - the outstanding practice in teaching and learning that already exists is shared across the school
 - all teachers consistently check learning frequently throughout the lesson and modify tasks where necessary to maintain pupils' rate of progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Given their starting points, they make good progress across the school. By the end of Year 2 they reach standards of attainment that are slightly ahead of national results in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Current information on pupils' progress shows that achievement is continuing to improve. Pupils are making at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and they use these skills well to help them learn in other subjects. Very occasionally, when teachers do not check progress closely during lessons and modify tasks appropriately, progress for some pupils slows.
- When children join the Reception they arrive with skills that are below those typical of children at that age. They are very well supported because teachers and teaching assistants work well together to provide a safe and stimulating environment. As a result, children enjoy school very much, thrive and make at least good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils' skills in reading and the opportunities for them to read to adults were identified as areas for improvement during the previous inspection, and there has been considerable improvement since then. In 2012, Year 1 pupils achieved results in line with national averages in the annual screening check in phonics (sounds and the letters they represent). Although there was an increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels in 2013, the improvement did not keep pace with national improvements. Currently, school information shows that Year 1 pupils are more advanced in their reading and they are expected to achieve well in this year's phonics check. Inspectors' observations endorsed this evaluation.
- Much has been done to improve the teaching of reading and pupils in Year 1 and 2 use phonics effectively to help them work out unfamiliar words. The most-able pupils read fluently and with expression. All pupils have the opportunity to read to adults on a weekly or more regular basis, depending on their rate of progress.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language, make at least good progress because of the well-tailored, additional support that they all receive.
- The most-able pupils achieve well because teachers plan learning that is challenging. Pupils respond well and make at least good progress.
- Those pupils eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium make good progress overall. They have benefited from extra support in response to their learning needs and, as a result, the gap in attainment between them and their peers has narrowed. Current information shows that by the end of Year 2 eligible pupils are on track to attain similar levels to their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Weaknesses that were identified have been tackled thoroughly so that teaching is at least good and some is outstanding across the school. Work in pupils' books and topic folders, and records of pupils' good progress confirm this evaluation.

- Teachers make sure that pupils of all abilities in their classes learn well. They plan learning, including in literacy and mathematics, that is challenging for all abilities, especially for the most-able pupils. A good variety of activities captures pupils' interests and enthusiasm.
- The quality of teachers' marking was a weakness at the previous inspection and much has been done to improve it. The marking of pupils' work in books and topic folders is, at least, consistently good and there is some outstanding practice throughout the school. Teachers give clear guidance on how pupils can improve their work and check regularly that pupils are acting on the advice they are given.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning skilfully to check pupils' understanding and to make sure all stay focused on their work. They extend pupils' speaking skills by expecting them to speak clearly, use full sentences when appropriate, and challenge them to explain fully their answers to questions. For example, children in Reception wrote sentences about their superheroes with the help of a teaching assistant who encouraged them to explain their ideas to others and showed them how to do so. Consequently, the children worked with confidence and all made good progress in developing their speaking, listening and writing skills.
- Well-trained teaching assistants work closely with teachers. They are very successful at supporting groups and individuals inside and outside the classroom. They are well briefed on what all pupils can do, so that different groups, such as disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, and those who are eligible for additional funding are supported effectively.
- Very occasionally, teachers do not check closely enough on pupils' learning and progress to make sure work is always challenging and at the right level. For example, this can be observed when some pupils have completed work and have to wait to move on, or when others do not understand fully what they have to do and are not given enough time to think what to do next. In these situations, progress slows.
- There have been rapid improvements in Reception since the previous inspection. The new team leader has reorganised the teaching spaces to benefit learning and very detailed tracking of children's progress is working well. The planning of learning is now a team effort shared with teachers and teaching assistants in the area. There is a strong focus on developing literacy and numeracy, and teachers and teaching assistants provide good role models, particularly in promoting correct speaking skills for pupils – no longer the weakness it was at the previous inspection.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is apparent both around school and in lessons. Pupils are friendly and polite to adults and are courteous and considerate to each other. They are enthusiastic about their learning and proud of their work.
- Children in Reception are keen to work and play together. They delight in helping one another and realise the importance of sharing and taking turns in activities and with equipment.
- Relationships are good. Staff manage behaviour consistently well, so that the atmosphere around school and in lessons is calm and purposeful. A few pupils have difficulty in managing their own behaviour and staff have a very good approach to dealing with such pupils. They listen to pupils and take time to resolve behavioural issues that arise. They are very supportive of the more vulnerable pupils.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Access to the building is secure and staff are rigorously checked prior to appointment. Pupils know how to stay safe. For example, children in Reception talked to inspectors with sound understanding about not speaking to strangers, road safety, and healthy eating.
- Pupils' understanding of bullying varies with age. Children in Reception were clear that if others were unkind to them they would tell the teacher and that the matter would be dealt with. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were more aware of different kinds of bullying and inappropriate name calling. They said bullying was rare and that when it did occur it was dealt with swiftly and effectively by adults. They are beginning to be aware of e-safety.
- Pupils are very proud of their school. The school grounds and building are litter free. Classrooms and corridors are bright and filled with stimulating resources which pupils respect and are keen to use.
- Attendance has been below average and the school has worked very hard to improve it by raising parents' awareness of the importance of good attendance, and by providing additional support for the families of pupils who are likely to become persistent absentees. Current figures show that attendance has risen considerably and that there has been a decline in the number of pupils who are persistent absentees.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher sets the highest standards and provides strong leadership. Along with other leaders and the governors, she has successfully addressed all the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. She is well supported by all staff, who share her drive and commitment to provide the best possible quality of education for all pupils.
- Leaders use very thorough systems to check the quality of teaching and provide all staff with opportunities to develop their professional skills. Teachers and teaching assistants are set targets based on pupils' progress, which are linked to pay progression and training. This system has led to rapid improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.
- Leaders have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Rigorous systems which involve year leaders and other senior staff have been adopted to check all aspects of the school's work. These leaders welcome the additional responsibilities that they have been given. As a result, improvements have been rapid since the previous inspection, and the school's plans for the future are well founded, thorough and shared by all leaders in the school. The school's impressive track record since the previous inspection shows that it has strong capacity for further improvement.
- The wide range of subjects the school provides contributes strongly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The learning provided helps pupils' to develop good basic skills in literacy and numeracy so they are prepared for the next stage in their education. Pupils particularly enjoy their half day, weekly visits to Forest School on the school site, which give them opportunities to take part in a variety of outdoor activities. Many clubs are provided after school, which are popular and well attended by pupils.
- Relationships with parents are good. Inspectors spoke to many parents who praised the school and felt their children were happy, safe and making good progress. This was also the view of the

small number of parents who responded to Parent View. Communication with parents is good because staff meet them at the beginning and end of every day to discuss pupils' progress and welfare. In addition, the school organises many opportunities for parents to gain skills that will enable them to help their children's learning at home.

- The school is making good use of the additional primary sports funding by employing a specialist coach to broaden the range of opportunities for pupils in and out of lessons. The coach also provides support for teaching staff and other adults to develop their expertise. As a result, the numbers of pupils participating in sporting events and after-school clubs have increased dramatically, and pupils' enjoyment and skill levels are growing rapidly.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide a wide range of academic and personal support for eligible pupils. Its use has been particularly successful in improving attendance and in providing additional support for learning so that eligible pupils make good progress. Additional funding also ensures that eligible pupils are able to take part in school trips and after-school clubs.
- The school makes sure that all pupils, regardless of background or ability, benefit equally from anything it has to offer. There is a strong emphasis on helping all pupils to achieve their very best.
- The school works well with local partners. It has beneficial links with the junior school, sharing staff and resources and aiding good progression for Year 2 pupils into Year 3. Similarly, it works well with the local nursery that is on the same site, to make sure children moving into Reception do so with the minimum disruption.
- The school has also benefited from working with a local infant school – sharing ideas, expertise and good practice. However, it has not taken full advantage of sharing the outstanding practice that already exists in the school across all classes. It has found participation in Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) Partnership Working project with Birmingham City Council, which has been set up to increase the number of good schools in the area, a valuable source for staff development and school improvement.
- The local authority works well with the school and has provided help and advice in improving the quality of teaching and raising standards.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very proud of the school and have high expectations for its pupils. They are very knowledgeable and bring a variety of expertise to the governing body. They visit the school regularly to check different aspects of the school's work, including: teaching and learning, scrutiny of pupils' work, management of behaviour, and pupils' progress. They have received training in the use of data on pupils' attainment and progress to compare the performance of the school with others nationally, and are able to competently judge teaching quality.
 - Governors oversee the systems for managing staff performance and apply the link between pupils' achievement and staff pay progression.
 - They are very supportive of the headteacher and other leaders but are constantly asking searching questions in order to challenge and bring about further improvements.
 - Governors monitor expenditure closely and are rigorous in ensuring that resources are used effectively to benefit pupils, including the use of pupil premium and primary sport funding.
 - Governors make sure that all statutory child-protection and safeguarding policies and procedures are met, and undertake all the relevant training to keep abreast of requirements.

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	103187
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	426925

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Valerie Seabright
Headteacher	Victoria Kelly
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2012
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