

Four Dwellings Primary Academy

Quinton Road West, Quinton, Birmingham, B32 1PJ

Inspection dates 19–20 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Requires improvement 3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement 3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement 3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement 3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement 3
Early years provision		Good 2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Although a good range of subjects are taught, the curriculum does not cover some subjects in sufficient depth to allow pupils to achieve well and does not prepare pupils well enough for life in modern democratic Britain.
- Leaders' feedback to teachers following checks on their work is not sufficiently focused on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning.
- Individual governors tasked with overseeing particular aspects of the school's work, do not have clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- Minutes from meetings of the Governing Body do not clearly record how governors are holding school leaders to account for their work.
- Behaviour requires improvement because in some classes pupils do not all pay attention. A few pupils chat or fiddle with resources instead of listening to their teachers.
- Teaching is not consistently good. Teachers do not always plan lessons which build on pupils' existing knowledge, skills and understanding. The most-able pupils are not always challenged by the work they are set.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to solve problems in mathematics.
- Some teachers in Key Stage 2 are not skilled and effective in teaching reading.
- The comments teachers write in their marking do not always help pupils to address their mistakes. Teachers do not all provide enough time for pupils to use these comments to make improvements to their work.
- Pupils' achievement requires improvement. Although it is improving, there is still ground to make up.
- Standards in spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting are not good. Teachers' own subject knowledge in these areas is not always good enough to bring about the improvements that are needed.
- Pupils who are at the early stages of learning to speak English do not all make good progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and other leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of the areas which require improvement.
- There are examples of good teaching which leaders are beginning to share and develop across the academy.
- Children make a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- The teaching of phonics is good.
- The academy's work to keep pupils safe is good. Staff provide an excellent level of care and parents are confident that their children are safe and well looked after.
- Attendance has improved considerably and is currently a little above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes at least once. Some of these were joint observations with the headteacher or one of the deputy headteachers.
- Inspectors considered the work in pupils’ books and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with three members of the governing body, the senior leadership team, department leaders, the pastoral manager and the Director of Education from the Academies Enterprise trust.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils on the playground and in lessons. They also spoke more formally to two groups of pupils about their views of the academy.
- Inspectors took account of the 10 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View and the 130 responses to the academy’s own questionnaire.
- The 49 responses to the staff questionnaire were considered.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, which included: the academy’s self-evaluation and plans for improvement, information about pupils’ attainment and progress, leaders’ records of their checks on the work of teachers, anonymised information about the management of teachers’ performance, minutes of meetings of the governing body and records relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Morag Kophamel, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Jatinder Virk

Additional Inspector

David Bowles

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Four Dwellings Primary School became an academy in January 2013. The academy is sponsored by the Academies Enterprise Trust.
- The academy is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is about 11%. This is below the national average.
- Over 60% of pupils are known to be eligible for support through pupil premium funding (extra funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children). This is more than double the national average.
- Approximately 50% of pupils are White British. The next largest groups are pupils of White and Black Caribbean heritage (9%) and pupils of Black Caribbean Heritage (8%).
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is similar to that found nationally. A small but increasing number are at the early stages in learning to speak English.
- Pupils attend the nursery for two and a half days each week and are full-time thereafter in Reception.
- The academy meets the current government floor standards, which set out the minimum requirements for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that all pupils make good progress, by ensuring that:
 - teachers set clear and high expectations for pupils' attention and behaviour in all lessons
 - teachers plan and set work for pupils that builds on what pupils of different ability already know, understand and can do and which provides an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils, including the most able.
 - teachers in Key Stage 2 all become skilled and effective in teaching reading
 - teachers and teaching assistants develop their subject knowledge and skills so that they teach handwriting, grammar, spelling and punctuation well
 - marking gives pupils clear guidance on how they should improve their work and pupils have time to respond to their teacher's advice
 - all staff develop their skills and ability to support and teach pupils who are at early stages in learning to speak English
 - pupils have increased opportunities to apply their learning in mathematics in order to solve problems.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - improving the impact of the checks that leaders make on teaching by ensuring that feedback focuses more strongly on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress
 - ensuring that when areas for improvement in teaching are identified, the targets set for improvement are precise and that leaders are clear about how and when they will check that the required improvements have been made
 - making sure that the curriculum is interesting and covers a good range of subjects in sufficient depth so that it enables pupils to make good progress in their learning
 - ensuring that the curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern democratic Britain
 - checking that governors with particular areas of responsibility are clear about their roles and about what is expected of them
 - ensuring that when governors provide challenge by asking questions, for example when academy leaders present reports about teaching and learning, these questions and leaders' responses are recorded in the minutes of meetings.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management **requires improvement**

- The academy's curriculum covers a broad range of subjects but these are not covered in enough depth to enable pupils to make good progress in all subjects. The work in pupils' books and on displays around the building is sparse in several subjects, including art, design and technology and geography. All pupils have an opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument and have free lessons for one year in Key Stage 2 but apart from this, there is insufficient evidence of good learning and progress in music.
- The academy has begun to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain by ensuring that they are tolerant of one another and understand that discrimination is unacceptable. Pupils recognise the importance of rules and laws within a community. Older pupils have a basic understanding of democracy and can explain how they voted in order to elect members of the school council. However, some older pupils were confused about what it means to be British. They thought that this was defined by the colour of a person's skin, their faith or the clothes they wear.
- Leaders make regular checks on the work of teachers by visiting lessons, looking at the work in pupils' books and reviewing information about pupils' progress. Leaders give verbal and written feedback to teachers to help them improve their skills. Teachers say that this is valuable and written records show that guidance is generally constructive. However, at times leaders' comments focus too much on what teachers are doing and not on the impact of teachers' actions on pupils' learning and progress. The suggested areas for improvements are sometimes too vague and records do not set out how and when leaders will check that the required improvements have been made.
- The headteacher and other leaders have worked effectively to improve pupils' behaviour and there are now few incidents of aggression or occasions when offensive language is used. However, leaders have not yet been successful in securing good levels of attention and positive attitudes to learning in all classes.
- Leaders have effective systems in place to collect and organise information about pupils' attainment and progress. Leaders use this information very well so that they have a clear and accurate knowledge of the classes, groups and individuals that are not making good progress. This information is then used to decide on which intervention should be planned for each underachieving pupil. Leaders are using this process well to identify and tackle any inequality in the progress made by individual pupils and groups.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have ensured that all eligible pupils have benefited from pupil premium funding. Funding has been used to provide a number of targeted interventions and to reduce the size of teaching groups. The attainment of eligible pupils is now similar to that of other pupils by the time they leave the academy. A pastoral manager has also been appointed using the funding and she has worked with other leaders to successfully improve the attendance and behaviour of disadvantaged pupils.
- Parents, staff and pupils have confidence in the leadership of the academy. The very large majority of parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, and who completed the academy's own survey agree that the academy is well-led and managed and responds well to any concerns raised.
- Since the school became an academy in January 2013, there have been considerable changes to the leadership team, including the appointment of a new headteacher. Leaders at all levels have an accurate and shared understanding of the academy's strengths and have well-documented evidence of the improvements which have been made in the quality of teaching and in pupils' achievement since the changes in the school's status and leadership. The headteacher and senior and middle leaders are acutely aware of the key issues which prevent the academy from being good. These are included in development plans which clearly and sequentially set out the steps that leaders will take in order to make the necessary improvements.
- The Early Years Foundation stage leader has been effective in improving teaching and as a result, children make good progress in Nursery and Reception.

- The new leader of teaching and learning works regularly with teachers to help them reflect on their teaching and improve their practice. Teachers, including newly qualified teachers, say that they receive good levels of support and guidance.
- The leader responsible for the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is new to this role but is developing a good understanding of how the support provided for these pupils can be improved. She has ensured that class teachers are clear that they are responsible for the progress of all pupils in their class, including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs.
- The academy's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. Staff work effectively with professionals from different agencies to ensure that any concerns are responded to quickly and appropriately.
- Primary sports funding has been used to employ a specialist coach who has improved provision in a range of sports. Teachers have observed this specialist teaching in order to improve their skills. The coach also leads lunchtime clubs and after school clubs and these have resulted in an increased proportion of pupils engaging in regular physical activity.
- The Academies Enterprise Trust provides very good levels of challenge and support to Four Dwellings Primary Academy. The Director of Education visits regularly and knows the academy extremely well. She has a thorough and accurate understanding of what the academy needs to improve in order to be judged as good.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Many governors have a great deal of expertise and knowledge about schools and education. The governors who met with an inspector have a thorough and accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and in pupils' attainment and progress. They were also clear about the use and impact of pupil premium funding. Minutes from meetings indicate that governors ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for the management of teachers' performance and that performance is suitably linked to pay. The governing body ensures that pupils are safe and well cared for. Governors make regular visits to the academy and make themselves available to talk to parents. As a result, they know that parents recognise the improvements that are being made and have confidence in the headteacher. Governors have recently established new roles for named governors who have responsibility for a particular aspect of the academy's work, such as safeguarding or mathematics. However, the remit and responsibilities of these roles have not been agreed and documented and this means that not all governors are clear about how to make the most of their visits to the academy. The headteacher and other senior leaders regularly present reports to the governing body. Governors and the headteacher say that governors often ask challenging questions about what is being done to improve teaching and achievement. However, minutes of meetings provide little evidence of governors asking questions or challenging leaders in order to hold them to account for their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. In some lessons, pupils do not listen carefully to their teachers and continue to talk or fiddle with resources when adults are speaking. Most pupils say that their teachers expect and insist that they behave well. However, some pupils told inspectors that their teachers sometimes have to stop teaching to settle the class down or repeat instructions because pupils are not listening. These poor attitudes to learning impact on the progress pupils make.
- Pupils' conduct around the building and in the playground is good. Typically, pupils are polite and helpful and get along well with one another.
- Leaders updated the academy's behaviour policy in 2013 and established a firm approach to dealing with aggressive behaviour. As a consequence, the number of exclusions rose sharply but then declined and continues to reduce.

- Leaders keep careful records of any incidents of poor behaviour and work with parents and other professionals when appropriate to help pupils to recognise and manage their emotions and so improve their behaviour.
- Almost all parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View or the academy's own survey were very positive about behaviour. The parents, staff and pupils who spoke to inspectors believed that behaviour is good and is well managed by adults.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe. At break times and lunchtimes levels of supervision are good. The academy's thoughtful and well planned approach to pastoral care means that pupils know that there is always an adult to talk to if they are worried or upset.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying such as racist or cyber bullying and say that incidents of bullying are rare and are dealt with effectively by adults. They are clear that the use of racist or homophobic language is unacceptable.
- The academy's register of adults who work at Four Dwellings fully meets requirements and is regularly reviewed and kept up-to-date. Staff training in safeguarding is also up-to-date and staff have a good level of awareness about potential risks to pupils, including in relation to extremism, radicalisation and female genital mutilation.
- Academy staff keep a close check on pupils' attendance and actively promote and celebrate good attendance with a range of rewards and incentives. As a result, attendance has improved considerably and is currently a little above the average nationally.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Although improving, teaching is not yet consistently good. The strengths that are apparent in some teachers' work are not embedded across the academy.
- Teaching is not always well matched to what pupils already know, understand and can do. This means that the work set for them is sometimes too easy, especially for the most-able pupils. At other times, teachers do not identify the correct next steps for pupils' learning. For example, some writing tasks focus very strongly on the particular features of different types of writing when less-able pupils are not able to write simple, legible and correctly punctuated sentences.
- Some teachers' and teaching assistants' knowledge about spelling, grammar and punctuation is not secure enough to enable them to teach these important aspects of writing well. They sometimes make errors in their explanations and in the examples they give to pupils. This causes confusion and slows progress.
- Teachers in Key Stage 2 are not all skilled in teaching reading. Some activities in reading lessons lack a clear purpose. They are sometimes focused on what pupils will do rather than on what they will learn or which skills they will develop.
- In contrast, the teaching of phonics to younger pupils is good; allowing them to apply their developing phonic knowledge well in their reading and increasingly in their spelling.
- The quality of teachers' marking is variable. Teachers do not all ensure that corrections are made and so some misunderstandings persist. Most teachers make written comments about some pieces of work, which identify what pupils have done well and give occasional next steps for learning. However, a few teachers make grammatical and spelling errors in their comments, which set a poor example for pupils.
- There are examples of more effective marking, particularly in Year 6 pupils' English and mathematics books, where teachers give clear feedback to pupils about what they have done well and about how they should improve their work. Pupils are given regular time to respond to these comments, make corrections

or tackle a further challenge set by the teacher. This is helping pupils to make good progress.

- Across the academy, pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their learning in mathematics in order to solve problems.
- However, in other respects the teaching of mathematics is generally effective, particularly in Key Stage 2. As a result, more pupils are making good progress in this subject. There are some examples of particularly effective teaching in mathematics. For example, in a Year 6 class, pupils were absorbed in a practical mathematics activity which required them to apply their calculation skills and their understanding of different measures.
- Teachers and teaching assistants make sure that activities in lessons are adapted so that pupils with disabilities and special educational needs understand what is expected of them and make good progress. Intervention programmes are delivered well. This means that pupils are helped to overcome particular difficulties, such as in reading and spelling.
- Most teachers and teaching assistants use questioning effectively to check understanding and to develop understanding of important ideas and vocabulary. Some of the most effective learning occurs when adults identify misconceptions through their careful questioning and then immediately tackle these so that pupils can move on quickly.
- Teachers and teaching assistants share a strong commitment to developing their practice. They are reflective and self-critical. For example, some adults acknowledge that they do not have the skills or knowledge to meet the needs of the small but increasing number of pupils who are at the early stages in learning to speak English. They welcome the training that leaders are planning to support their development in this aspect of their work.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Attainment is low but rising. Although rates of progress are improving overall, progress is not consistent in all classes and subjects because of variations in the quality of teaching.
- From very low starting points, children now make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In 2014, more children leaving Reception were ready for Year 1 than in the previous year.
- In 2014, the attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 was below that of pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. The large majority of these pupils made typical progress in reading from their starting points at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and around a third made more rapid gains. This was not the case in mathematics and writing where fewer pupils made the expected progress.
- Standards reached by Year 6 pupils in 2014 were significantly below average in reading and writing. Attainment in mathematics was closer to the national average.
- In reading and writing, the attainment of disadvantaged Year 6 pupils in 2014 was similar to that of their classmates and so they were about six months behind the average for all pupils nationally. However, in mathematics, disadvantaged pupils were around eight months ahead of their classmates and their attainment was similar to the average for all pupils nationally. Disadvantaged pupils generally make similar progress to the other pupils in their class and in some cases their progress is more rapid as a result of effective intervention programmes funded through the pupil premium.
- The work in pupils' books shows that not all of the most-able pupils make good progress. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels at the end of both Key Stage 1 and 2 was below the average nationally in all subjects.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language generally make similar progress to other pupils. However, the small but increasing number of pupils who are at the early stages in learning to speak

English do not all make good progress because teachers are unsure of the best ways to meet their needs.

- Standards in handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar require improvement. Progress in these aspects of writing is sometimes slow because of weaknesses in teaching.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils' progress and attitudes to reading are variable. Some older pupils read fluently, with good understanding and expression. They talk confidently about books they have enjoyed and express preferences for different authors. Other pupils are not able to read for a sustained period with an appropriate level of concentration; some lack fluency and have limited understanding of what they are reading.
- In contrast, pupils currently in Key Stage 1 enjoy books and are making good progress in reading because they read regularly to staff and are strongly encouraged to read regularly at home. The effective teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is also helping pupils to develop accuracy and fluency in reading. The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check was above the average nationally. Pupils enjoy reading and talk with enthusiasm about the stories that adults read with them in lessons.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs generally make progress at a similar rate to their classmates. Some make better progress than this as a result of the academy's effective and well targeted intervention programmes.
- Pupils of Black Caribbean heritage and White and Black Caribbean heritage make progress at a similar rate to other pupils.
- Attainment in 2014 was higher than in 2013 in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of both Key Stage 1 and 2. Information about pupils' progress and evidence from the work in their books indicates that this improving trend is continuing for pupils currently in the academy.

The early years provision is good

- Children join the Nursery with skills that are often below those typical for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy skills. In 2014, the proportion of children leaving Reception, who had reached a good level of development and were ready for Year 1, was close to the average nationally. This represents a considerable improvement from 2013.
- The Early years Foundation Stage leader is very effective. She has a thorough understanding of children's needs and abilities. She carefully checks the progress of individuals and groups of children in order to work with teachers to plan activities which meet their different needs. She works alongside teachers to demonstrate good practice and improve their confidence and skills. This has resulted in improvements in the quality of teaching, particularly in Nursery.
- Adults work closely with parents and carers to secure positive relationships and help children settle quickly. Parents are welcome to come into the classrooms with their child each morning and are kept well informed about their child's learning and progress.
- Good arrangements are in place to keep children safe. Parents and carers value the care shown towards their children by the staff.
- Adults focus strongly on developing children's communication and language skills and adults take every opportunity to extend children's vocabulary and encourage them to talk in sentences. Adults use questioning effectively to encourage children to explain their thinking and ideas. A speech and language therapist visits each week to provide extra support for children and to advise staff on how best to help children improve their communication skills.
- As a result of good teaching the majority of children make good progress in their phonics skills and

children in Reception are using this knowledge to read simple books and to write for different purposes.

- Adults work together to plan interesting activities in classrooms and in the outdoor area, which cover all the areas of learning with a focus on the development of early reading and number skills.
- Children behave well and play and work together co-operatively. When adults teach classes and work with groups, the majority of children are focused and attentive.
- Adults provide well-planned activities and tasks for children to access independently. However, at times the purpose of these activities is not clear to all children and some are not sure what they are supposed to do. This can occasionally hinder their learning for some children.

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	139131
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	447873

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	440
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Malcolm Lever
Headteacher	Robert Jones
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
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