

# Nansen Primary School

Naseby Road, Birmingham B8 3HG

**Inspection dates** 8–9 March 2016

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management Good

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment Good

Personal development, behaviour and welfare Good

Outcomes for pupils Good

Early years provision Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Inadequate

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders, staff, governors and the trust have created a vibrant school community. The drive and energy to secure the very best outcomes for all pupils in the school is palpable.
- The headteacher has successfully motivated and worked with other leaders and staff to significantly improve all aspects of the school.
- The chief executive officer, directors of CORE Education Trust and governors have high aspirations for pupils and staff. They provide valuable support and challenge to senior leaders.
- The early years leader and staff make sure that the youngest children make a strong start to their education and are excited about learning.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 make good progress over time. As a result, standards are rising quickly from low starting points.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability, disadvantaged pupils, boys and girls make similar rates of progress.
- Pupils behave well and are keen to learn because teachers make effective use of the information they have about pupils' achievement to plan activities that are suitably challenging and interesting.
- Staff put into practice CORE Education Trust's values: collaboration, opportunity, respect and excellence. They also make sure that safeguarding procedures are effective. Consequently, pupils feel safe, cared for and very proud of their school.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy taking on roles and responsibilities in the school, entering competitions and performing in local venues. This helps to build their self-confidence.
- British values are promoted effectively. Pupils are caring, respectful and tolerant.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are a few inconsistencies in teaching. Occasionally teachers do not ensure that pupils have enough opportunities to develop reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics. In the Nursery, staff sometimes miss the chance to help pupils to talk about and share their ideas.
- The quality of pupils' handwriting is inconsistent across the school.
- Although pupils' attendance is improving, it remains below the national average for primary schools.

## 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.

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

- Continue to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement by:
  - sharing the existing effective practice so that teaching is of the highest quality in all classes
  - ensuring that teachers provide activities that develop pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics
  - making sure that Nursery staff help children to talk confidently about their ideas
  - ensuring that pupils write neatly and form their letters correctly.
  
- Improve pupils' attendance so that it is at least in line with the national average for primary schools.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Since the previous inspection in April 2014, the school has been through a difficult and turbulent journey. In the past two years, the school has been led by five different interim headteachers, almost half of the class teachers have left, and most of the senior leaders and teachers with responsibilities have also left. During this time, the chief executive officer, the trust and the governors, all of whom were appointed after the school went into special measures, have not allowed complications to divert them from their aim to do the very best for the pupils and ensure that pupils at Nansen receive a good education.
- The headteacher joined the school in April 2015. She is an excellent leader. She is highly ambitious for the pupils, staff and community. The headteacher's unrelenting focus on improving teaching and raising pupils' achievement has led to rapid improvements in all aspects of the school's work.
- The deputy headteachers and assistant headteachers are an enthusiastic and efficient team. They provide the headteacher with strong support. Together with the headteacher they keep a close check on the work of staff and the achievement of different groups of pupils. Senior leaders use the information they gather from visits to lessons, pupils' work and information about pupils' achievement to identify the precise actions that will be taken to ensure that pupils make at least good progress.
- Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. For instance, they know that they have yet to eradicate some weaknesses in mathematics teaching and in teaching in the Nursery. They also recognise that opportunities for staff to share existing effective practice are currently underdeveloped.
- Teachers with additional leadership responsibilities have recently started to take a greater role in instigating improvements in the school. These teachers lead 'teaching and learning clusters' that are made up of groups of staff and pupils. Each cluster focuses on a specific aspect of the school's work. One member of staff commented, 'these clusters are empowering staff and pupils'. The clusters are a new initiative and their impact on the school has yet to be seen.
- Procedures for managing the performance of staff are effective. Senior leaders make sure that individual members of staff receive the support and guidance they need to improve their work. They also challenge and tackle underperformance in teaching. Staff work well as a team. Individuals told inspectors, 'We are well supported', 'I am optimistic about the future,' and 'I am a happy member of staff'.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The CORE Education Trust's four values – collaboration, opportunity, respect and excellence – underpin all aspects of school life. Staff, governors and trustees uphold these values in the way that they interact with each other and with pupils. As a consequence, pupils learn to be tolerant and respectful. 'I love my school because it is a place where everyone is welcome, no matter where they are from,' said one pupil. Additionally, opportunities such as becoming a school councillor and meeting members of Parliament make pupils aware of the importance of democracy.
- Visits to different places of worship, lessons about world faiths, school assemblies and learning about and from events in the past such as the Holocaust, make a strong contribution to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- Pupils are taught a broad range of subjects. Effective planning ensures that pupils acquire the necessary knowledge and skills in subjects such as music, art, history and geography. Pupils also have the chance to participate in a broad range of after-school and lunchtime clubs, such as football, dance, art and cheerleading.
- Teachers, governors and directors of CORE Education Trust continually seek opportunities to enhance pupils' experiences. Most recently, pupils won an award for designing a globe out of recyclable material, the school choir, 'Standing Ovation', performed at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, and a group of pupils watched the men's Davis Cup team train and interviewed the players.
- The physical education sports funding is used well. A team of specialist sports coaches effectively help pupils of all ages to be healthy and active. They also help pupils to successfully improve their balance, agility, coordination and control skills. Pupils are increasingly participating in sporting competition against local schools.
- Almost all of the parents who spoke with inspectors were positive about the school. They told inspectors that their children are happy and safe in school and that they are making better progress. A number of parents praised the actions taken by the headteacher to improve the school. A few parents raised concerns about the number of temporary teachers. The number of temporary staff has reduced and governors are in the process of recruiting more permanent class teachers.

## ■ The governance of the school

- The chair of the local governing body and other governors are highly committed and capable. They actively seek the views of staff, pupils and parents in order to ensure that they have a realistic understanding of the school's effectiveness.
- Governors have a broad range of expertise that enables them to provide senior leaders with a good level of support and challenge. They ask perceptive questions about the achievement of different groups of pupils because they gather their own first-hand information and because the headteacher and other senior leaders keep them well informed.
- Governors frequently check the difference that additional support from adults is making to pupils. If necessary, they liaise with senior leaders to ensure that prompt changes are made to the type and frequency of support that pupils receive. They know that the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is enabling these pupils to make good progress.
- The chief executive officer and directors of CORE Education Trust are innovative in their approach to school improvement. They are dynamic individuals who believe passionately in helping pupils to secure the best educational outcomes and to become citizens of the world. They are self-reflective and continually making changes to the way in which they work so that they can make best use of their skills and expertise. They have recently introduced termly reports which accurately encapsulate the strengths of the school and where further improvements are required.
- CORE Education Trust holds senior leaders and the local governing body rigorously to account for the difference they are making to pupils' learning and personal development. The chief executive officer is an exceptional leader. Together with the headteacher he ensures that the achievement of pupils and staff are celebrated and immediate action is taken in response to any weaknesses.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff have been trained to keep children safe and they promptly report any concerns they may have about pupils. Staff have undertaken first-aid training and some are qualified paediatric first-aiders. Staff, governors and trustees are vigilant in protecting children from radicalisation, extremism and child exploitation. Procedures for the appointment of staff are rigorous and relevant checks are made on all who visit the school.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers and teaching assistants fully embrace the school motto, 'nurturing tomorrow's explorers'. Senior leaders work well with staff to ensure that activities for pupils are interesting and that they encourage pupils to be inquisitive learners. This practice contributes well towards pupils' positive attitudes towards learning.
- Staff make effective use of questions to check pupils' understanding throughout lessons. Depending on the responses that pupils give, teachers either clarify misunderstandings or challenge pupils' thinking further. This ensures that no learning time is lost for pupils.
- Pupils told inspectors that their teachers make sure that they understand what they are expected to learn by the end of the lesson. In a number of instances, inspectors observed teachers providing pupils with clear explanations when introducing new ideas.
- Teachers help pupils to make good progress over time because they use the information they have about pupils' achievement to plan activities that provide suitable challenge for pupils of different abilities.
- Teaching assistants work well with teachers to ensure that any additional support for pupils is pertinent and effectively builds on pupils' previous learning.
- Reading sessions are carefully planned so that pupils learn to read a variety of texts with confidence. Pupils use their knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) well to read unfamiliar words and to spell with accuracy. Pupils in Year 2, for instance, made effective use of phonics to successfully read and spell words containing 'ay' and 'ai'. Pupils regularly read at home and school. A group of boys were particularly positive about the electronic reading system which gives them access to a wide range of books at home and stores the books they have selected in a personal online library.
- Teachers plan writing activities that are interesting and thought provoking. They inspire boys and girls to express their ideas and make good and sometimes outstanding progress. Pupils in Year 5 were proud to show inspectors their writing about Anne Frank. One commented, 'it makes me sad about what happened to her and her family. I now feel lucky to have what I do.' In all classes, there are regular opportunities for pupils to learn how to use punctuation and grammar correctly and to learn how to write stories, letters, diaries and poems, for instance.

- Pupils are successfully helped to become proficient in using their knowledge of number to complete calculations with accuracy. Teachers also make sure that pupils are able to use appropriate strategies to check the accuracy of their own work. However, there are inconsistencies in the teaching of mathematics. A few teachers do not ensure that pupils have enough opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge to reason and solve problems. This slows some pupils' progress.
- Teachers set a suitable range of homework tasks that reinforce what pupils have learnt in school. They also give pupils the chance to find out more and be creative. Most recently, pupils created a story in a box as part of World Book Day. Examples included the story of 'Jack and the Giant Beanstalk' with carefully produced figures of a castle, a giant and a beanstalk. Also, 'Finding Nemo' with 'floating fish' inside a fish tank and against a backdrop of aquatic plants. This particularly activity encouraged parents and their children to share and enjoy stories together.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- 'Pupils have a voice at Nansen' and 'we are a family here' were just some of the comments made by pupils to inspectors. Pupils have excellent opportunities to influence the work of the school. The pupil subject ambassadors, for instance, discuss curriculum improvements with staff. Pupils told inspectors that French lessons have been introduced in response to their feedback.
- Pupils are reflective and considerate learners. They listen carefully to the advice that teachers and teaching assistants provide in order to improve their work. Pupils willingly help each other and celebrate each other's successes during lessons.
- Staff make sure that pupils are taught how to stay safe. The pupils who spoke with inspectors confirmed that they feel safe in school. They also talked knowledgeably about road safety, staying safe from online bullying and the safe storage of medication at home. Older pupils emphasised the importance of making safe choices and about the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.
- Pupils learn how to be responsible citizens and to look after each other. The 'CORE' pupil ambassadors, for example, meet with school leaders to discuss the role they can play in promoting pupils' rights. 'I make sure children are happy and safe,' commented one of the pupils.
- The younger pupils in the school write neatly and with attention to detail. They make sure that their letters are accurately formed, in the correct direction and the right size. While the older pupils take care to present their work well, some lack the skills required to write neatly and form their letters correctly.
- Staff work well with families and external agencies to encourage pupils to attend school regularly. Although this work has resulted in recent improvements in attendance, it remains below the national average for primary schools.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and courteous. They greet each other, adults and visitors with a friendly welcome.
- Classrooms are calm. Pupils settle quickly to work, listen carefully and respond enthusiastically during class discussions. In one instance, a group of Year 6 girls eloquently explained to a group of boys why their response to a mathematical response was accurate.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They dress smartly. Pupils with specific responsibilities wear the school pin badge with honour. Pupils are keen to show visitors their work that is on display in classrooms and corridors.
- Almost all of the parents who spoke with inspectors confirmed that pupils behave well. Pupils who spoke with inspectors confirmed this was the case. School records show that incidents of poor behaviour and bullying are rare and that staff take prompt and appropriate action.
- A small minority of staff who completed the Ofsted questionnaire raised concerns about pupils' behaviour, as did a few parents who spoke with inspectors. Inspectors found that a very small number of pupils are a little boisterous during lunch breaks. However, their behaviour is improving because senior leaders are taking effective action. A wide range of playground equipment is encouraging pupils to play together well. Adults are also interacting with pupils and showing pupils how to use the play equipment. Following a suggestion from pupils, leaders are planning to develop a creative playground so that pupils have even more activities to choose from when they are outside. The overwhelming majority of pupils play together

well in the playground. They share equipment, devise their own games, and look out for each other so that no one is without a friend.

## Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils are currently making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. Pupils in the older classes are catching up on lost ground from previous years and standards are rising.
- In 2015, the school experienced significant disruptions with staffing. This had a detrimental impact on pupils' achievement. The standards attained by pupils in Year 6 dipped and were well below the national average. A significant minority of pupils made less than expected progress from the end of Year 2 to Year 6. In some year groups, boys did not attain as well as girls. In the Year 1 phonics check for instance, the proportion of girls achieving the expected standard was above the national average. In comparison it was below for boys.
- Senior leaders have taken appropriate action in response to the dip in pupils' achievement in 2015. Consequently the progress of pupils currently in the school is improving quickly and the gaps between different groups of pupils are closing rapidly.
- Boys and girls are motivated to learn and succeed in different subjects. This is because staff plan activities that engage all pupils. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning, coupled with rising standards, are preparing them well for secondary school.
- The most-able pupils make good progress because they are provided with activities that challenge and extend their learning. A group of pupils in Year 4 were particularly keen to show inspectors how they used a range of books to research Alfred the Great and then summarised their findings.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities is comparable to their classmates. Teachers make sure that these pupils receive the precise guidance they need. In one example, the teacher helped pupils in Year 5 to articulate what they were going to write before they recorded their ideas. Pupils were successfully helped to make sure that their sentences made sense and that they used the correct punctuation.
- Effective use of pupil premium funding enables disadvantaged pupils to make strong progress. This funding gives disadvantaged pupils access to targeted support from adults, a range of after-school activities and educational visits, and specialist external support for those with very specific learning needs.
- Senior leaders know that standards are rising quickly from a low starting point. However, they are not complacent about this. They correctly recognised that some of the older pupils in the school have been adversely affected by the previous weaknesses in teaching and need extra support to reach the standards expected for their age. Inspectors found that this additional support is helping older pupils to catch up quickly with their learning.

## Early years provision

is good

- The assistant headteacher with responsibility for early years is an enthusiastic leader and an excellent role model. She has an accurate and thorough understanding of the strengths and relative weaknesses in the Reception classes and in the Nursery class. She successfully supports and challenges staff in order to ensure that children make good progress.
- Early years staff work well with parents to ensure that children settle quickly. Staff make sure that procedures for keeping children safe are effective and that children learn how to stay safe when moving around the indoor and outdoor areas and when using classroom equipment.
- Relationships are positive. Children behave well. They respond quickly to instructions and listen carefully to adults and each other. They sustain their concentration and become completely captivated by the wide range of interesting activities that staff plan.
- Children start the Nursery with skills and abilities that are below those typical for their age. This is particularly the case in reading, writing, speaking and mathematics. In 2015, the proportion of girls achieving a good level of development was similar to the national. In contrast it was below for boys and for disadvantaged children.
- Staff have made appropriate changes to the curriculum and the support they provide to different groups of children. Visits to lessons, children's work and the school's own information about current children's achievement shows that boys, girls, disadvantaged children, the most able, and pupils who have special

educational needs or disability make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1. The majority of children currently in the early years are on track to achieve a good level of development.

- Additional funding is used well to provide personalised support for disadvantaged children. Staff also make sure that the activities they plan interest boys and girls. In the Nursery, for example, children were thoroughly enjoying completing activities linked to the rhyme 'Jack and Jill'. One group, for instance, were challenged to make a clay container for holding water. They handled the clay with dexterity and used their imagination to create unique designs.
- Teachers and teaching assistants successfully motivate and inspire children to make strong gains with their reading, writing and mathematics skills. The children in Reception worked enthusiastically as they wrote simple sentences, used their knowledge of phonics to spell words, counted the characters and illustrated their 'Goldilocks and the three bears' books. They were rightly proud of their work.
- Staff in the Reception classes use questions well to extend children's learning and to encourage them to talk about their learning. In contrast, staff in the Nursery miss opportunities to develop children's speaking skills. This prevents children from expressing their ideas and occasionally restricts the progress that some children make with this aspect of their learning.
- The classrooms, corridor areas and playground areas are particularly exciting in Reception. The castle, the outside painting wall, the forest school area, and a range of interesting objects encourage children to be curious and use their imagination.



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138799
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10008515

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	930
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bryony Flint
<b>Headteacher</b>	Catherine Rindl
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 4645760
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.nansenprimaryschool.co.uk">www.nansenprimaryschool.co.uk</a>
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<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2–3 April 2014

## Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in care) is above average.
- The vast majority of pupils are of Pakistani heritage. Very few are in the early stages of learning English.
- In 2015 the school did not meet the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- At its previous inspection in April 2014, the school was placed in special measures. Since this inspection the school has experienced a high turnover of staff. The majority of senior leaders and approximately half of the class teachers who were in post at the time of the last inspection have left.
- Since 2014 the school has been led by five different interim head teachers. The current headteacher, who is also a local leader of education, joined the school in April 2015.
- A new board of trustees was appointed in July 2014. A new local governing body was established in November 2014. The Department for Education changed the sponsor arrangements in March 2015. CORE Education Trust replaced the previous sponsor.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups and visited lessons to talk to pupils about their work and to review samples of pupils' work from different subjects. The headteacher, one of the deputy headteachers and the assistant headteachers joined inspectors during the majority of visits to lessons.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the two deputy headteachers, other senior leaders, teachers with specific responsibilities and members of the local governing body. They also met with the chief executive officer and directors of CORE Education Trust.
- Inspectors spoke informally to parents at the start and end of the school day. There were insufficient responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, for these to be made available to inspectors.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and also spoke informally with pupils during the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of the 47 staff responses to the Ofsted questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of the school's documentation including information about safeguarding and attendance, evaluations of the quality of teaching, information about the achievement of pupils in all year groups, minutes of governing body meetings, and information relating to pupils' behaviour.

## Inspection team

Usha Devi, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Demmerling	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Else	Ofsted Inspector
Lynda Townsend	Ofsted Inspector

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