

Erdington Hall Primary School

Ryland Road, Erdington, Birmingham B24 8JJ

Inspection dates

24–25 May 2016

Overall effectiveness

Good

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| 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 | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since the last inspection, the new principal and vice-principal have worked in close partnership with their lead sponsor school to improve the quality of teaching and accelerate outcomes for pupils.
- As a result, standards across the whole school are rising. In Year 6 in 2015, pupils made good progress; standards were much higher than they were in 2014 and closer to the national average. All groups of pupils make consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- This good progress is due to good teaching. Leaders and managers use new, robust arrangements to check how well pupils are learning. This assessment information is used by teachers effectively to set work for pupils based on their different needs.
- Governors from within the Ninestiles Academy Trust have a proven track record of successful educational practice leading to good outcomes for pupils. They know the school well and offer constructive advice about school improvement.
- Children make a good start to their learning in the early years. They make rapid gains in their skills and knowledge, from their typically lower than expected starting points, as a result of highly effective teaching and support.
- Pupils' behaviour and personal development and welfare is good. Safeguarding training has been received by all staff and the arrangements for keeping pupils safe in school are effective.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although outcomes in English are improving, the proportion of pupils who make better than expected progress in reading is lower than it is in writing and mathematics. This is because there has not yet been sufficient time for the changes introduced to the teaching of reading to accelerate pupils' progress and have their full impact on their outcomes.
- Teachers are using the school's new marking policy well, but are not yet checking consistently enough that pupils' learning is improving as a result of their comments. Consequently, some pupils continue to make the same mistakes in their next pieces of work.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress that pupils make in reading by ensuring that teachers and support assistants make consistent use of the newly introduced reading programmes in order to impact fully on pupils' outcomes.
- Ensure that teachers consistently check that pupils are learning from the mistakes identified by them in their work so that the same mistakes are not repeated in the next stage of their learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The principal, vice-principal and leaders at all levels have a clear understanding of what needs to be done in order to secure better outcomes for pupils. Existing strengths from within the Ninestiles Academy Trust have been used effectively to accelerate growth in leaders' knowledge and in their ability to act decisively to bring about rapid school improvement.
- As a result, the changes that have been introduced to the school since the previous inspection have had a significant impact on the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils.
- Rigorous monitoring of teaching, together with a carefully planned programme of staff development, have improved teachers' subject knowledge and helped them to have a better understanding of how to raise outcomes for pupils.
- Middle leaders use the new assessment system effectively to monitor the progress of the pupils within their phases and to develop clear plans for improvement, which are understood by all staff. The leaders in charge of English and mathematics have an accurate understanding of key issues; they are highly diagnostic and use data very effectively to improve outcomes across the school.
- Teaching seen across the school, in all year groups, is consistently good and is contributing effectively to good progress.
- As a result, the proportion of pupils, in all year groups, that are now making expected progress from their starting points is improving at an accelerated rate. The proportions of pupils in Year 6 who are on track to reach better than expected outcomes from their starting points in Year 6 are high in writing and mathematics. However, the proportion of pupils on track to make better than expected progress in reading is lower than that in writing and mathematics.
- The curriculum is broad and exciting and contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All staff have received training in how to help pupils appreciate cultural similarities and differences, using the West Midlands Quaker Peace Education Project and a 'champions of change' staff group. As a result, pupils have a good appreciation of cultural diversity, and this is a key factor in the work that is being done to keep them safe from radicalisation. Pupils are taught about fundamental British values through debating activities led by visiting lecturers from Birmingham University and, consequently, are being prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Links between subjects are encouraged through school trips and big questions. For example, in the Year 1 topic on growth, the big question, 'Where do these plants come from?' extends science learning into geography; independent research, with resourcefulness and resilience fostered through the school's 'building learning power' approach, sees the pupils using iPads and laptops to research the areas of origin of plant life seen first-hand at the botanical gardens.
- The funding provided to the school to support the development of sport has been used effectively to provide staff training to improve teachers' skills. Funding has also been used to improve the provision for after-school clubs. School information shows that the take-up of after-school clubs can be limited as a result of parental preference; this can be a barrier to pupils' opportunities. As a result, funding has also been used to develop lunchtime clubs, thus ensuring that all pupils have the same opportunities. Pupils who might not have stayed behind after school can now take part in football, basketball, dance and cricket experiences and this is contributing to their personal development and well-being.
- Funding provided to the school to support disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. Previous gaps in attainment between these pupils and other pupils in the school and nationally are closing quickly.
- The money provided to the school to support pupils who have special educational needs or disability is also used effectively. Pupils are supported by additional adults alongside their peers in the classroom and in smaller groups. Specific work is set to help them access more quickly the same lesson material as their peers. As a result, the progress that these pupils make from their starting points is good.
- The majority of parents who met with inspectors at the start of the school day, and those who responded to the free text part of the online questionnaire, are extremely positive about the school. They say that their children like coming to school and that they feel safe.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The school's academy council (the local governing body) comprises members from the trust board and from other schools locally. There is also parental representation. Since the majority of this local governing body are educationalists, they have a very clear insight into the strengths and areas for

improvement of the school; they fully understand the implications for outcomes as a result of pupils' assessment information; they are able to hold school leaders fully to account for the progress that pupils make.

- Governors are well trained and they understand the links between performance management and teachers' pay. They know about the impact of funding received by the school to support the development of sport and that pupil premium funding is having a positive impact on improving the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. They regularly visit the school and enter into professional dialogue regarding areas for improvement.
- Despite their knowledge and understanding of educational matters, governors fully respect their position and know that they are not responsible for the daily management of the school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a clear system in place to report concerns and the staff responsible for keeping pupils safe from harm are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching is precise, well planned and focuses sharply on the next steps in pupils' learning. This is because the recently introduced assessment system is being used effectively to pinpoint the stage of learning that the pupils are at. This information is used accurately to set work which is at the right level for the next stage in pupils' learning.
- Effective training has been provided to ensure that teaching assistants can deliver targeted support. Small groups of pupils are introduced to the lesson material by the teaching assistants, through a pre-tutoring approach which happens in advance of the lesson. This means that pupils are better able to understand what is being taught when they rejoin their classes, and accelerated progress is made by them as a result.
- In addition, teachers and teaching assistants consistently check the level of pupils' understanding in lessons and respond quickly to their needs. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, the teacher and teaching assistants were highly skilled at identifying when pupils needed to be moved on to the next stage in their learning. As a result, the pupils were constantly being given work suited to their varying needs and no learning time was wasted.
- The impact of this good teaching is that pupils are making accelerated progress from their starting points. However, the number of pupils making better than expected progress in reading is not as high as it is in writing and mathematics.
- The number of pupils who reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 last year was lower than it had been in previous years. Teachers have received intensive training to address this issue and are now teaching phonics well. Pupils are making good progress as a result of this good teaching.
- Teachers include within their planning a focus on the most able pupils; they plan and set work which is at the right level of challenge. As a result, the progress that these pupils are making is improving at an accelerated rate.
- An analysis of pupils' work shows that teachers are clearly following the school's recently introduced marking policy. Teachers' subject knowledge is good; their marking is diagnostic and is leading to an improvement in pupils' work. However, some pupils' books showed that they are continuing to repeat the same mistakes later on in their work, despite corrections being made by the teachers. This is because teachers are not yet systematically checking the impact that their marking is having on pupils' future learning.

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 take a real pride in their books; handwriting across the school is of the same high quality in all subjects.
- The good curriculum promotes discussion and debate, and pupils are learning how to construct a rational argument and to express an opinion. This is helping them to have a better understanding of radicalisation

and life in modern Britain.

- Pupils' confidence is building as a result of termly music performances in front of their parents, where they showcase the progress they are making with their instruments. An increasingly large number of parents are now visiting the school to see these performances and this is helping to build strong relationships with the parent community.
- Pupils are encouraged to voice their opinions and feel that teachers help them. They are highly positive about their learning experiences and their teachers. One pupil commented that 'teachers know everything and help us to know how to improve'.
- Pupils believe that the adults in the school care for them and make learning fun; at lunchtime they skip with the supervisors and they have lovely teachers to talk to. They have excellent understanding of how to avoid cyber bullying.
- They told inspectors that there is no bullying in school and that, if it happens, it is dealt with quickly. The school's work is helping them to have a better understanding of the behaviour of other people and to show compassion for their needs. One of the pupils expressed this opinion: 'Some bullies are sad and have been bullied themselves, so they need help'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enter the school calmly and are ready to learn quickly. They return from their breaktimes in an orderly fashion and are quickly ready to work.
- Pupils care for, and show respect for, each other. For example, during dinner time the inspectors observed a pupil offering to pour others on his table a glass of water.
- Pupils' attitudes towards learning are good and they are keen to learn.
- In the past, attendance has been much lower than the national average. School information indicates that there is a significant improvement in absence this year and it is now broadly in line with the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Since the last inspection, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 have been tackled and teaching is now consistently good across the whole school. As a result, pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and standards are rising.
- Pupils enter the school at levels which are typically below, and often significantly below, those expected for their age. By the time pupils leave Year 6, the proportion that have made expected progress in reading is slightly below the national average and the proportion making expected progress in writing and mathematics is above the national average.
- The number of pupils in the current Year 6, who started at the school in Reception and who are on track to make expected progress in reading and mathematics, is high in comparison with other pupils nationally. The proportion on track to make better than expected progress in mathematics is much higher than the national average.
- Last year, the proportion of pupils who successfully met the standard in the phonics screening test was lower than the national averages. Swift action from the school leaders has resulted in current assessments showing that the proportion of pupils on track to reach the required standards will be broadly in line with the national averages this year. This represents good progress from their previously low starting points.
- The school's own rigorous assessment information shows that pupils in other year groups are making accelerated progress from their starting points. In key stage 1, the proportion of pupils on track to reach age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics is improving rapidly. A larger proportion than in previous years are on track to reach age-related expectations by the end of the year.
- This progress is a result of improvements in teaching and leadership at all levels.
- Nonetheless, the proportions of pupils on track to make better than expected progress in reading are not as high as they are in writing and mathematics. The school has introduced the Fresh Start programme and internal assessments show an improvement in the proportions of pupils who are on track to make better than expected progress this year. However, there has not yet been enough time for this programme to have a significant impact on published outcomes.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making accelerated progress and the gap between their outcomes and those of their school peers is closing at an accelerated rate. Assessments in reading, writing and mathematics

show that the children are now broadly in line with their school peers. This improvement in outcomes is as a result of using the funding judiciously in the appointment and training of staff, which is enabling them to lead intervention programmes designed to support pupils' varying needs.

- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are making good progress. The school's special educational needs coordinator is experienced and works effectively across the trust. Staff receive training which allows them to deliver intervention materials which are having a high impact on outcomes. Assessment information shows that pupils are making huge gains over a short period of time as a result of this focused pupil work.
- The most able pupils are tracked carefully across the school. They are now making better than expected progress and are all on track to reach or exceed the age-related expectations within the new curriculum.
- As a result of these good outcomes, the pupils are ready for the next stage of their education.

Early years provision

is good

- Typically, children enter Nursery with levels of skills, knowledge and understanding which are below, and often significantly below, those for their age, especially in the area of communication, language and literacy.
- The children are very well supported and make good progress from their starting points. The proportion of children attaining a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year in 2015 was broadly in line with the national average. A check by the visiting inspectors, on children assessed as already working at a good level of development, validated teachers' assessments as accurate. These children were able to use their phonetical knowledge to read and spell words expected at this age and are, therefore, well prepared to move into Year 1.
- Teaching across the setting is effective because leaders have a really accurate understanding of the stage of learning that the children are at and how to move them forwards. Learning journals are extremely well kept, with detailed and accurate comments which include next steps for children's learning. Staff are proactive in using this information to develop weekly plans which target the gaps in their learning through adult-led intervention.
- Teachers and teaching assistants make good use of the outdoor learning environment to develop language and problem-solving skills. Guttering is used imaginatively to create a waterfall in order to challenge the children to use their problem-solving skills to fill a container and to use their language skills to communicate their intent. Staff model problem-solving skills and appropriate language by playing alongside the children and talking through what they are doing. They state out loud, 'My container is empty, what am I going to do?'
- During these fun learning activities, the children work together well and treat each other, and the adults around them, with respect.
- Funding provided to support disadvantaged children is used effectively. Additional adults ensure that children are able to work individually on developing their lower than typical communication, language and literacy skills.
- Assessment of children's next steps for learning are shared with the parents at workshops so that they can help their children at home. The school's tracking system is showing that this is having a positive impact on children's outcomes.
- Children are kept safe by staff and all safeguarding requirements are met.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 138194 |
| Local authority | Birmingham |
| Inspection number | 10012380 |

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

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| 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 | 451 |
| Appropriate authority | The Ninestiles Trust |
| Chair | Chris Stevens |
| Principal | Carol Phillips |
| Telephone number | 0121 464 3122 |
| Website | www.erdingtonhall.org.uk |
| Email address | enquiry@erdhall.bham.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 8–9 April 2014 |

Information about this school

- Erdington Hall Primary School is a sponsor-led academy within the Ninestiles Academy Trust.
- It is larger in size than most primary schools.
- Since the last inspection the school has appointed a new principal, vice-principal and 10 teachers.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority) is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils whose first language is not believed to be English is more than double the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is broadly in line with most other schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons, two of which were joint observations with the principal and vice-principal. They carried out a number of walks around the school. Inspectors observed pupils on entry to the school, at breaktime, lunchtime and around the school building, and heard some pupils read.
- Inspectors considered a range of school documentation with the principal, vice-principal and executive vice-principal. This included the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, a range of the school's internal assessments of pupils' attainment and progress, safeguarding policies and procedures and information about pupils' attendance. In addition, the inspectors reviewed samples of pupils' work in English and mathematics, together with a range of other subjects, from each of the year groups.
- Meetings were held with the chief executive officer, the executive vice-principal, the chair, vice-chair and another governor of the academy council, senior members of staff and a group of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the eight free-text responses to the online survey, Parent View, met with parents at the start of the school day, spoke with a parent on the telephone, reviewed 32 pupils' responses and considered 16 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

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|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Graeme Burgess, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Rowena Green | Ofsted Inspector |
| Janet Baker | Ofsted Inspector |

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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