

Firbeck Academy

Firbeck Road, Wollaton, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG8 2FB

Inspection dates

15–16 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Senior leaders have not secured consistently good teaching through the school.
- Pupils do not make as much progress as other pupils nationally in key stage 2, particularly the most able pupils and some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders do not check well enough the progress made by disadvantaged pupils. This group of pupils do not make as much progress as other pupils nationally through key stage 2.
- Leaders do not consistently set measurable targets to evaluate the performance of teachers. The quality of teaching requires improvement.
- Pupils do not make as much progress with their reading as they could because teachers do not check pupils' understanding of their reading well enough.
- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. There is still some low-level disruption in some classes which slows the learning of all pupils.
- Some pupils do not focus well enough in lessons and do not present their work as neatly as they should.
- The curriculum does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills. Consequently, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in writing.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils has been too low until recently.
- The provision in the early years requires improvement. Teachers do not regularly check what the children know. Consequently, children do not make as much progress as they could.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is improving. As a result of more effective leadership, the proportion of good teaching has increased since the previous inspection.
- The proportion of children who gained a good level of development at the end of the foundation stage has increased, and is now just above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the English grammar, spelling and punctuation assessment at the end of key stage 2 was broadly in line with the national average.
- The leader of the focused provision tracks the progress of the deaf pupils well. This group of pupils make good progress.

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?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, by:
 - closely analysing the impact of the pupil premium funding, including in the early years, to ensure that the additional funding is being used effectively to increase the progress made by disadvantaged pupils
 - ensuring that the targets which are set to evaluate the performance of teachers are consistently measurable
 - providing more opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to develop their writing skills
 - checking more closely the effectiveness of the provision for pupils who receive support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise pupils' achievement, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have consistently high expectations, particularly for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, in reading and writing
 - checking pupils' understanding of the texts that they have read and using this knowledge to develop their reading skills
 - further developing pupils' vocabulary to make their writing more interesting.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and personal development and welfare, by:
 - encouraging pupils to take more pride in their work and to develop the attributes of being a good learner
 - eradicating low-level disruption in some classes to accelerate the progress of pupils
 - working more closely with families to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve the provision in the early years, by:
 - ensuring that teachers regularly check the progress made by the children so that adults working in the setting know the next steps of learning for the children
 - ensuring that the early years pupil premium funding is meeting the needs of disadvantaged children and increasing the progress made by this group of children.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that there is consistently good teaching for all pupils. Pupils do not make as much progress as they could through the school, including the most able. Outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 show that the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 was lower than other pupils nationally. The proportion of pupils who achieved at a higher level in all three subjects was also lower than the national average.
- Leaders have not checked the impact of the pupil premium funding, including in the early years, closely enough to improve the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Although leaders have put in place intervention strategies to increase the progress of disadvantaged pupils, they have not checked which strategies have been the most or least effective. This group of pupils do not make as much progress as other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The targets set by leaders to evaluate the performance of teachers are not always measurable. Consequently, support has not been put in place quickly enough to rapidly improve the quality of teaching, to ensure it is consistently good.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils, including the most able, develop their writing skills across the curriculum. Scrutiny of current work by pupils shows very few opportunities where the pupils develop their writing skills other than in English lessons. Consequently, pupils are not developing the skills to become good writers well enough and the outcomes for writing are below the national averages at the end of both key stages 1 and 2.
- Some pupils who receive support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make consistently good progress in their learning. The special educational needs coordinator has not checked regularly enough the quality of the provision in the mainstream school to ensure that the needs of the pupils are being met. The school tracking information shows that the pupils who have social and emotional difficulties make less progress than they should.
- The deaf pupils who have a statement for their special educational needs or who have an education, health and care plan make good progress through the school. These pupils have a place in the focused provision for deaf pupils and receive good support to enable them to achieve well. The leader of this provision knows the pupils well. She tailors the curriculum to meet the needs of the pupils and closely tracks their progress. Consequently, the pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- The senior leadership team have worked well to improve teaching and learning. They have implemented a comprehensive programme of training and tailored support to improve teaching. The subject leaders for English and mathematics have increased their monitoring of how well the key subjects are taught and they have supported teachers to improve their practice. Consequently, the quality of teaching has improved.
- The curriculum is greatly enhanced by the use of external teachers and visits. Pupils have the opportunity to learn to play the guitar or flute. Some pupils are part of a local

band with pupils from other local schools and perform in musical concerts. 'Wow' days have developed pupils' engineering knowledge. The pupils enjoyed the visit to Nottingham University where they learned to build a moving toy duck using gears. These events have raised the pupils' aspirations for their future career choices.

- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The school organises an international day where pupils dress in their national dress and eat food from different countries. Residential visits to Sutton Bonnington and Edale develop pupils' personal and social skills. The inclusive ethos of the school ensures that pupils appreciate their differences. The signing choir, involving both deaf and hearing pupils, is very popular and performs for members of the public. Equality of opportunity is promoted well by the school.
- Pupils' understanding of British values is improving. The pupils learn about democracy through voting for members of the school council. They learn about different religions in the curriculum. However, the leaders recognise that the pupils' understanding of different religions would be further enhanced through more contact with people from the religions that they study.
- The sports premium funding has been used well to improve the quality of teaching and to increase the range of sports taught on the curriculum. Specialist coaches teach dance, Zumba, gymnastics, games and orienteering. More pupils, both girls and boys, are taking part in competitive sports, such as the local football and basketball school leagues. Extra-curricular clubs at lunchtime and after school have also increased the proportion of pupils engaged in sporting activity.
- The local authority adviser has provided good support for the school. She has worked with the deputy headteacher to improve the provision in the early years. More recently, she has observed teaching across the school and provided useful feedback to help improve the quality of teaching. Outcomes in the early years have risen and the quality of teaching is improving.

Governance of the school

- The governing body and members of the trust have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have challenged school leaders to improve the quality of teaching and have been keen to know the impact of the school leaders' actions. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection.
- The governors visit the school and conduct learning walks to inform their views about the quality of education at the school. They ask leaders questions following their visits to help improve standards further. The chair of the governing body visits the school weekly and takes a close and practical interest in the detail of school life, including recent building work. The building work has been completed on time and the school continues to improve.
- The governors ensure that only good teaching is rewarded through the appraisal process. The governors closely check the performance of teachers before awarding pay awards. They have declined pay awards when they have felt the evidence has not supported the proposals.
- The members of the governing body closely monitor the performance of pupils in the

different year groups. The governors know that the disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as other pupils at the school. However, they have not checked rigorously enough the impact of interventions that leaders have put in place to diminish the differences in the outcomes between the two groups of pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders are proactive and respond quickly to any safeguarding concerns that are raised by pupils or staff. They hold a weekly meeting for staff to share any concerns they may have about a child and these are securely recorded. Leaders' record-keeping is detailed and contains the actions that they have taken regarding any concerns that have been raised.
- The school works closely with a range of agencies, including social care, to safeguard pupils. Information is shared quickly to ensure that concerns are responded to in a timely manner.
- The counselling service that the school provides supports pupils who have social and emotional difficulties. The school leaders work closely with parents and carers. They have ensured that parents can also access the counselling support to help their child at home. This support has helped to reduce incidents of poor behaviour by some pupils.
- The chair of the governing body is the link governor for safeguarding and he reviews the school's work for this area well. He completes an annual audit of safeguarding procedures at the school which is then shared with all the governors. He recently attended staff training on safeguarding, covering issues of abuse via mobile technology, to ensure that his knowledge is up to date.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers have not challenged the most able pupils well enough. Their expectations have been too low. This group of pupils did not make good progress by the end of key stage 2 in 2016 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not regularly check pupils' understanding of their reading. Scrutiny of pupils' books shows very few opportunities for pupils to develop comprehension skills in reading except in Year 6. Consequently, their skills are underdeveloped.
- The teaching of phonics is not as effective as it could be. Teachers do not always insist that pupils participate in the lessons and say the sounds that they are focusing on. The most able are not encouraged well enough to think of a wider range of words that contain the sound they are learning. Not all pupils are making as much progress as they could.
- The pupils' writing is not as developed as it could be. There are too few opportunities for pupils to write using a range of genres across the curriculum. Pupils do not write for different purposes as well as they could.
- Teachers are now challenging the most able pupils in mathematics. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that pupils are being given a range of problem-solving and reasoning tasks

to complete, particularly in Years 3 and 4. The most able pupils told the inspectors that they are challenged more in mathematics. As a result, this group of pupils are now making better progress in mathematics.

- The teaching of English grammar, spelling and punctuation is effective. Pupils are taught the correct grammatical terms and are using a range of conjunctions and clauses in their sentences to make them more interesting. Some pupils are trying to be more ambitious with their vocabulary. In Year 6, pupils were keen to research synonyms for known words and then write sentences using their new words. Pupils were skilfully questioned by the teacher to check that their words were used in the right context. However, too many pupils are not being ambitious with their word choices to improve their writing.
- Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to investigate in science. In key stage 1, pupils have investigated whether their age was linked to the length of their feet. This encouraged pupils to be accurate with their measurements and to reach a conclusion.
- Deaf pupils in the focused provision are taught well. A group of pupils were challenged well to learn number bonds to 20 using their previous knowledge of number bonds to 10. This enabled pupils to learn mathematical patterns and apply their knowledge to complete new calculations.
- Teachers have had many opportunities to moderate pupils' work with other schools. This has led to more accurate assessment. Consequently, the work set for most pupils is now better matched to their learning needs.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Not all pupils focus well enough in lessons to complete the learning task or present their work as neatly as they can. Some pupils consequently do not make as much progress as they could.
- Pupils do enjoy the roles of responsibility that they are given. Young leaders promote sport with all the pupils at lunchtimes and assist in the organisation of assemblies. The members of the school council are fundraising for charity. Older pupils confidently conducted tours for visitors for the opening of the new building. Carrying out these roles develops pupils' self-confidence.
- Pupils work well in teams when completing tasks in the forest school. Pupils learn to make a fire and, alongside their parents, have planted trees. Teachers have reported that pupils' confidence improves following participation in these activities.
- The inclusive culture of the school ensures that hearing pupils have a good understanding and awareness of the needs of deaf pupils. All pupils participate in assemblies where adults promote signing. Pupils also write to deaf pupils in a school in Rwanda to learn more about another culture. This promotes an ethos of understanding and respect for all.

- Pupils say that incidents of bullying have reduced sharply. Parents speak positively about the swift and effective action taken by school leaders when bullying has been reported.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' safety well. The pupils learn how to ride a bike safely in Year 6 and learn about the dangers of drug misuse. All the pupils learn about road safety and pupils know how to stay safe online.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Some pupils do not focus as well as they could in lessons. On some occasions, this can cause other pupils to be distracted. Consequently, the progress made by some pupils is not as good as it could be.
- Pupils' attendance last year was below the national average. A significant minority of pupils caught an illness last year which caused the attendance to drop. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils was lower than other pupils in the school and below the national average for all pupils.
- The attendance officer is working with families to reduce the number of persistent absentees and has organised a walking bus to encourage pupils to attend and be on time. The attendance and punctuality of all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, has improved in the first half term of this current academic year.
- The leader of behaviour monitors the causes of poor behaviour closely. Intervention strategies such as the lunchtime club and the nurture group have helped pupils to improve their behaviour. Pupils also respond positively to the behaviour policy and try and earn the Firbeck pound to spend in the school shop. Consequently, the number of behavioural incidents has fallen sharply. In addition, the number of fixed-term exclusions has also reduced and is now very low.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes at the end of both key stages 1 and 2 in 2016 are below the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in science was broadly in line with the national average at the end of key stage 1, but lower by the end of key stage 2.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, did not make enough progress through key stage 2 by the end of 2016. Consequently, the proportion of pupils who achieved highly in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2 was below the national average.
- Outcomes for boys in the phonics check dropped in 2016. The proportion of pupils who passed the check in Year 1 is now below the national average. The school has reorganised how phonics is taught and implemented staff training. Initial assessments show the progress of current pupils is mostly good.
- Pupils who have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs make good progress from their starting points and attain well at the

end of both key stages 1 and 2. Pupils in the focused provision for the deaf make good progress from their starting points.

- Pupils who receive support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make as much progress as other pupils nationally, particularly in their writing.
- The outcomes of disadvantaged pupils in the English grammar, spelling and punctuation assessment were similar to other pupils nationally. This was the case for both the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard, and for those pupils who achieved highly.
- The progress made by pupils who had low prior attainment through key stage 1 was faster than for other pupils nationally who had similar starting points in all subjects.
- The school's current tracking information shows that most pupils are making expected or better progress, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able, particularly in mathematics and reading. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are also making good progress from their starting points.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The teachers do not check regularly enough what the children know. Consequently, teachers' planning of the next steps for the children's learning is not as effective as it could be.
- The teachers' recording of children's progress is not systematic and not easily accessible to all the adults who work with the children. As a result, the learning does not always match the needs of the children to enable them to make consistently strong progress.
- Leaders have not ensured that the early years pupil premium has been effectively used to improve the outcomes for disadvantaged children. They have not tracked closely the impact that the funding has made to improve the proportion of disadvantaged children achieving a good level of development. Disadvantaged children achieve less well than other children nationally by the end of the early years.
- There are good links with parents when the children start in the Nursery and start in the Reception Year. Meetings are held with parents to inform them about school routines and to enable the school staff to get to know the children. However, teachers do not consistently liaise with parents to find out the children's achievements at home to help them plan effectively to meet the needs of all the children.
- Leaders have established good links with external services to support children who have speech and language difficulties. Parents of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities speak positively of the support they have received for their children in the early years.
- The leader of the early years has worked closely with the local authority adviser to ensure that the learning environments in the early years are meeting the needs of the children. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development by the end of the early years has increased and is now above the outcome for all children nationally. Consequently, more children are better prepared to start in Year 1.
- The learning environment in the Nursery is very positive. The children were enthused

by their arctic topic. They enjoyed buying their tickets to fly to the arctic and completing drawings in the fake snow. This encouraged the children to develop their speaking skills as well as promoting their creative development.

- Relationships between adults and the children are warm. Adults are encouraging children in the Nursery to expand their vocabulary in mathematics. The children could identify the properties of a triangle and a rectangle as well as identify a semi-circle. They are learning to count accurately the number of sides and are making good progress.
- In the Reception Year, the teacher used the story 'Handa's Surprise' to develop a range of activities to promote the children's learning. The children enthusiastically sold fruit in a shop and used materials to build a village. The children worked well, both independently and with adults, and made good progress.
- The children know the routines well in the early years and respond well to the instructions of adults. The learning environments in the early years are positive.
- The school promotes the welfare of the children well. There are trained members of staff who can administer paediatric first aid. The school does not allow the use of mobile phones within the settings.

School details

Unique reference number	139326
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	10021914

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Crawford
Executive Headteacher	Vicky Hayles
Telephone number	0115 9155739
Website	www.firbeck.org.uk
Email address	admin@firbeck.nottingham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 March 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is a member of the Nottingham University Samworth Academy Trust.
- The executive headteacher is also the headteacher of Westdale Junior School, Nottingham.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school has a focused provision for deaf pupils. All the pupils in this provision have an education, health and care plan or statement of special educational needs. There are currently 12 pupils in this provision.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, for whom the pupil premium provides support, is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is just above the national average. The proportion of pupils who receive support for their special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much higher than the national average.
- The governing body manages the breakfast club.
- In 2015, the school met the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' outcomes and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed lessons jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work across the school in a range of subjects.
- Meetings were held with the members of the senior leadership team, and members of the governing body and the trust, including the chairs of the governing body and the trust. In addition, meetings were held with the leader of the focused provision for the deaf pupils, the special educational needs coordinator and the leaders of English, mathematics, behaviour, early years and physical education.
- The inspectors met a group of pupils from key stages 1 and 2. The inspectors also observed pupils in the breakfast club and at breaktime, and listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day. The inspector also considered the 26 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation including the school's improvement plan, the executive headteacher's and head of school's reports to the governing body, minutes of the governing body meetings, records of the governors' visits to the school, the school's most recent information on pupils' achievements and information relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, exclusion and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Martin Finch, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Peter Stonier

Her Majesty's Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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