

Falla Park Community Primary School

Falla Park Road, Felling, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE10 9HP

Inspection dates

26–27 January 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not devised efficient assessment systems. Pupils' progress and the attainment of groups of pupils are not captured with sufficient detail or accuracy. This means that provision and resources are not channelled appropriately.
- Senior leaders do not reliably check that their actions or those of subject and phase leaders are making a difference. Too few pupils, in particular the most able and disadvantaged pupils, are challenged or supported effectively.
- The quality of teaching is too variable. It has not been good enough over time to enable pupils to make consistently good progress, especially with regard to reading.
- Staff do not use time productively. Inefficient to-ing and fro-ing between classes means that valuable teaching and learning time is lost. In lessons, learning slows as pupils wait for adults' direction.
- Teachers are not consistent in their approach to pupils' work. Expectations in terms of the quality and presentation in pupils' books vary across classes and subjects.
- Adults in the early years do not promote the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics with enough intent. Children have insufficient opportunities to practise and apply their skills.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has a candid view and understanding of the school's performance. Her determination and actions to secure improved teaching and learning are beginning to bear fruit.
- Leaders have successfully created a positive school ethos with children's well-being firmly at the core. Consequently, pupils feel safe, are happy and their social and emotional needs are well met.
- Pupils' attendance is good. Leaders are diligent in tackling any rare instances of regular absence.
- Leaders have established a varied and enriching curriculum. Pupils are inspired to appreciate and learn about the world around them. A sense of awe and wonder is promoted.
- Pupils behave well. Staff, parents, carers and pupils are confident of strengthening behaviour under the headteacher's watchful eye.
- Leaders use the primary physical education and sport funding effectively. Pupils can access a wide variety of activities indoors and outside, to keep fit, informed and healthy.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers by:
 - addressing inconsistencies in teaching and learning rigorously
 - raising expectations and standards in reading across key stages
 - devising accurate assessment systems that capture the attainment and progress of all groups of pupils so that challenge and support is targeted appropriately
 - systematically ensuring that leaders' actions are making a difference to the rates and extent of pupils' progress
 - holding subject and phase leaders stringently to account for the progress of all groups of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and the most able.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching across key stages, including the early years, by:
 - making sure that all available teaching time is used effectively to promote learning
 - developing greater challenge and pace in lessons, paying particular attention to the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged
 - raising teachers' expectations in terms of the quality and presentation of pupils' work in books across the curriculum
 - giving pupils more opportunities to read regularly with adults and respond in depth to high-quality texts
 - offering children in the early years more opportunities to practise and apply their skills, knowledge and understanding in reading, writing and mathematics.

An external review of the school's use of the 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

- The headteacher, new to post in January 2017, has correctly identified and begun to tackle the most pressing areas requiring improvement. Revised reading strategies and new phonics and spelling programmes have been implemented. The profile of reading has been raised. Pupils' current progress in reading, however, remains a weakness because leaders do not systematically check that their actions are leading to improvement.
- Leaders have not yet devised sufficiently accurate and robust assessment systems. They are therefore unable to use information skilfully to ensure that timely support and challenge is in place for all groups of pupils. As a result, progress and attainment, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and the most able, remain too variable.
- Some subject and phase leaders are relatively new to post. They have begun to check more regularly on the quality of teaching and learning. They have not, however, sufficiently challenged and supported staff to address the variance in practice and standards of work that pupils produce. Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning remain across key stages.
- Leaders carefully consider how best to spend the school's pupil premium funding. They do not, however, evaluate its effect rigorously enough. Consequently, the support and resources secured are not having the maximum impact on reducing differences between disadvantaged pupils and others, across subjects.
- Leaders enrich the curriculum in an effort to inspire, engage and inform pupils. Pupils' experiences are broadened through carefully selected educational trips and visitors, including author visits. Staff feel empowered by leaders to use pupils' interests to create projects that aim to excite and enthuse. Pupils in key stage 2 talked passionately about their studies of World War 2, and others found facts about the ancient Mayan culture absorbing. The academic curriculum, however, is not yet tailored effectively to meet the needs of all groups of pupils, particularly with regard to reading.
- Leaders use the additional money for special educational needs responsibly. Staff have support, training and regular updates from the inclusion manager and other specialists. Pupils failing to make progress are identified quickly in partnership with parents and other agencies. Occasionally, there is a blurring of lines between those pupils who are low-attaining and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This leads to variation in the support offered and, consequently, variable rates of progress for some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders' work to promote children's rights, respect and responsibilities is evident across the school. Pupils display tolerant and respectful attitudes and behaviours to each other and adults. They talk with empathy and understanding about others' cultures and viewpoints. In this way, staff are equipping pupils with a range of moral, social and personal skills and beginning to develop pupils' understanding of core British values.
- The headteacher has quickly and successfully established a positive ethos and shared her vision for improvement. An honest, inclusive approach has earned her the full

backing of staff, parents and governors. From this position she is well placed to challenge and support whole-school improvement moving forward.

- The local authority has responded promptly to the school's weaker outcomes for pupils in 2016. Governors, the headteacher and subject leaders have access to specific training and guidance; the local authority's English, mathematics and early years consultants are already working in partnership with the school. Links with other schools have been brokered. A steering group has been established to ensure that regular checks are made on progress against the school improvement plan. These measures are augmenting leadership capacity.
- Leaders and managers have promoted the value and importance of good attendance effectively. They follow up any absences and poor punctuality diligently. Consequently, no groups of pupils are unfairly hampered by poor attendance.
- Leaders and managers ensure that the additional funding for sport and physical education is used effectively. Pupils taste a wide menu of invigorating sporting activities such as fencing, archery, hockey, dodgeball, dance and golf. Active, healthy lifestyles are effectively promoted.
- Leaders, including mentors, provide effective support for newly qualified teachers. Induction procedures and appropriate professional development opportunities equip teachers with a suitably informative and positive start to their teaching career.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a frank view of the school's performance and, having been disappointed with pupils' outcomes in 2016, fully accept the findings of the inspection. Their reflective, candid approach leads them to ask challenging questions of school leaders. Commitment to continual improvement is evident.
- The chair of the governing body is ambitious for all pupils. She is mindful of weaker aspects of the school's work as well as its strengths. Along with other governors, she has welcomed the setting-up of a steering group with local authority partners in order to drive rapid improvement. The priorities of the steering group are the right ones, with reading, the most able and disadvantaged pupils high on the agenda.
- Governors meet regularly with staff to discuss the work that they are doing. They visit frequently to see the school in action and gauge for themselves its effectiveness. Records demonstrate that governors are not slow to give praise where due or voice concerns where they arise. In this way, both staff and pupils have effective critical friends.
- Governors fully understand the link between teachers' pay and performance. They engage a local authority's adviser to ensure that the headteacher's performance is also managed in a fair, transparent and comprehensive manner.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that staff have regularly updated training. Adults are familiar with the most recent information and amendments to statutory guidance regarding the protection of pupils. These measures contribute effectively to the school's ability to keep pupils safe and free from harm.

- The large majority of pupils spoken with said that they feel safe in school. All staff believe this is the case and most parents who expressed their opinions agree. One comment by a parent encapsulated the prevalent view: 'the school promotes a safe and inclusive education using innovative approaches'.
- Several leaders and governors have been trained to give meticulous consideration to the suitability of adults working with children. This means that employment processes are tight, adhering to the principles of safeguarding and safer recruitment.
- Adults are interested in the welfare of children and their families. As one parent put it, 'teachers and staff care about my child, as if she were their own.' Staff work hard with external agencies to serve the community well. Vulnerable pupils' needs are managed with both industry and consideration. Seeking to widen the palliative aspect of this role further, leaders are in the process of securing the services of a family liaison officer.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistent across key stages. As a result, not all pupils make the progress that should be expected of them. In particular, disadvantaged pupils and the most able are not reliably challenged or supported to improve rapidly.
- Teachers do not plan sufficiently challenging work for the most able pupils. In English lessons, for example, reading 'journals' and specific spelling and grammar work aim to kindle a depth of thought about the texts and language that pupils are using. Too often, though, pupils complete work quickly, finding it easy. Progress stalls as they wait politely for additional work, saying that they are not sure what to do next.
- Some adults make every minute count. These teachers use time effectively to squeeze out every opportunity for learning, in class-based lessons and outside. Too often, however, this is an exception rather than the rule. The pace of learning in some year groups is too slow and pupils make little progress.
- Pupils engage in lots of moving about across the school day. While intended to make sure that pupils get to the right place to access teaching and learning matched to their needs and capabilities, movement is poorly organised and orchestrated. Valuable teaching and learning time is lost.
- Pupils' workbooks show that some pupils are making good progress. Books are neatly presented and work is of good quality. Whether extended writing, science or topic work, some teachers instil high and consistent expectations in pupils. Not all teachers, however, insist on pupils making their very best efforts across subjects in this manner.
- Some pupils read frequently with adults. Pupils' books, reading records and teachers' logs show that these pupils are developing a love of reading, good levels of fluency and a range of comprehension skills. These pupils are also beginning to understand the significance of reading in all areas of the curriculum. Nevertheless, not all pupils have equal opportunities to read regularly and respond to high-quality texts with adults.
- Staff understand the potential contextual constraints of urban living. They actively seek to enhance pupils' learning experiences. To this end, pupils plant fruit trees, cook outside, go on trips to the forest, grow vegetables, look after pets and make dens. Bringing the outdoors alive and instilling a sense of awe and wonder is developing

pupils' spiritual awareness and equipping them with additional interests and skills for later life.

- Teachers usually articulate the sounds that letters make accurately. There is still a lack of consistency in ensuring that pupils do too. Too few pupils reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- Pupils respond well to teachers' comments about their work in mathematics, making progress as they do so. There is evidence of a rich diet of mathematics topics being presented and increasing application of reasoning and problem-solving in pupils' work across the curriculum.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils like their school and feel happy and well looked after. They say that playground buddies and members of the pupil council listen to them carefully and consider their views. Adults help them if they have worries, and they appreciate the 'worry boxes' they can use if they need help or want to talk.
- Pupils are able to discuss a variety of ways to keep themselves safe. Teachers have equipped pupils with knowledge and understanding about 'stranger-danger', e-safety, railways and road safety as well as the dangers of water and fire.
- Pupils value their meetings with the safeguarding governor who consults with them about their feelings of safety in school.
- Pupils' physical health is of prime importance to school leaders. A wide range of after-school and lunchtime clubs ensure that pupils' physical needs are well met. In addition, class projects promote the importance of healthy eating and keeping fit.
- Staff work well with external agencies and families to make sure that pupils' welfare needs are met. The majority of parents find adults in school approachable and helpful, saying that teachers 'gladly listen to parents' when they have questions or concerns.
- Pupils feel confident that bullying is not an issue in their school. They are in no doubt that any misbehaviour will be dealt with firmly and fairly by adults. Pupils can discuss bullying and the forms that it may take competently, understanding how it might affect others.
- Pupils work hard to please staff. Strong, positive relationships abound. Friday assemblies build on pupils' positive attitudes to learning; becoming a 'VIP' is a highly sought-after accolade. Pupils are proud of themselves and each other when nominated and named in the 'golden book' or receiving a 'pen licence'. Pupils demonstrate confidence that their good efforts will be recognised.
- Pupils' understanding of how to be a successful learner is underdeveloped. Despite pupils' willingness to learn, not all are able to express how or what they need to do to improve.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils live up to the school's guiding principles of 'responsibility, respect and compassion'. They enjoy the roles and responsibilities that the school affords them and show respect for the school's rules, environment and each other.
- Behaviour in and around the school is good. Pupils listen and respond respectfully to adults' instructions. They hold doors open politely and wish visitors a good day. Playtimes are active, cheerful affairs.
- Pupils want to be in school. They like to be on time and their attendance is good. Very few pupils are hindered by regular absence. Leaders have well-documented and carefully executed procedures in place to ensure that any absences are promptly followed up.
- In lessons, even where pupils lack challenge and have to wait for further guidance or resources, they follow school rules, and attitudes remain positive. Low-level disruption is rare.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors, although mindful of their duty to use the pupil premium funding wisely, do not check carefully enough to see if it is having the intended effect. This means that differences between the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and others remain variable over time.
- In 2016, too many disadvantaged pupils did not make good progress. In key stage 1, differences between disadvantaged pupils and others widened in reading and mathematics. In key stage 2, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils reaching age-related expectations in all subjects was well below others nationally. Differences were particularly stark in reading, with none reaching a depth of learning. In science, only half of the disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 reached age-related expectations.
- Too few of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, reached a depth of learning in 2016, particularly in reading and writing. Most pupils who read with inspectors did so fluently, using and applying skills of inference and deduction effectively. The frequency with which pupils read with adults, however, varies. This leads to variable outcomes, as some have too few chances to practise their skills, test their understanding and discuss texts in depth.
- Variability in teaching means that progress for current cohorts is inconsistent. Progress for the most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils, in particular, remains patchy.
- Attainment in phonics, although improving, has been below national averages over time. Leaders' emphasis on developing teaching and learning in this area means that current pupils are beginning to benefit. Teachers now model and articulate sounds more carefully and correctly.
- Most pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make small steps of progress in keeping with their identified needs. Extra support and interventions are put in place to address pupils' requirements. The current inconsistencies in assessment and teaching mean that some pupils in this group make slower than expected progress.

- Pupils' attainment in key stage 1 has broadly matched others nationally over time. In 2016, in key stage 1, the proportion of pupils reaching and exceeding expected standards in writing and mathematics remained in line with national averages. These strengths are indicative of pupils' capabilities.
- Girls in key stage 2 in 2016 did particularly well in mathematics. The proportion of girls reaching age-related expectations and acquiring a depth of learning exceeded national averages.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- A sizeable proportion of children start the early years with skills and knowledge that are lower than typically expected for their age. Although children have up to five terms in Nursery and a year in the Reception class, too few make rapid enough progress to catch up with their peers nationally and achieve the early learning goals in reading, writing and mathematics. This means that children are not well prepared for the demands of the key stage 1 curriculum. Over time, the proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development has remained below national averages.
- Leaders were unable to provide an accurate picture of assessment and a detailed analysis of outcomes for the different groups of children in Nursery and Reception. The extent to which progress had been made by current and past cohorts was unclear. This is limiting leaders' ability to tackle the underlying issues that are prohibiting some pupils from reaching a good level of development.
- The Nursery environment is well equipped in terms of outside and indoor resources to build confidence and develop gross and fine motor skills. Children enjoy listening to daily stories and talking about, as well as choosing, books to take home. The environment overall, however, is not rich in literacy and numeracy opportunities. This means that vital knowledge, understanding and skills in mathematics, reading and writing are unable to fully flourish.
- The Nursery is housed in a separate building to the main school which is situated across the road. Adults use the opportunity of entering and exiting the main school building to teach children about the importance of road safety and high visibility.
- Teaching and learning in Reception is of variable quality. While children are happy and enjoy the wide array of activities that are available, the focus on improving academic skills and abilities within reading, writing and mathematics is unconvincing. Too often, children drift from area to area unsettled and fidgety. A lack of guidance and challenge about what children are expected to do means that progress is too slow for too many.
- Early years staff have strong, positive relationships with children. Adults use this rapport to build children's readiness to learn. Questioning skills and verbal interactions in small groups or on a one-to-one basis are enabling. Adults speak and listen to children respectfully, building banks of spoken vocabulary and developing early language skills well. In this way, children's confidence and abilities in communicating and making their feelings known are effectively fostered.
- Links with families are good, and staff actively forge beneficial partnerships through open days, parent workshops and family learning days. Children are happy and well looked after. Welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	108358
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10000872

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	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	261
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vera Codling
Headteacher	Vanessa Carr
Telephone number	0191 433 4011
Website	www.fallapark.gateshead.sch.uk
Email address	fallaparkcommunityprimaryschool@gateshead.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 September 2011

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the impact of the pupil premium funding spend on its website.
- The school is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for support through the pupil premium, is well above average.
- The majority of pupils are of White British Heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receiving support is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs and/or disabilities or an education, health and care plan is below average.

- The school met the government's floor standards for primary schools in 2015.

Information about this inspection

- Teaching and learning were observed across classes and key stages. During day one of the inspection, observations were conducted jointly by the lead inspector and the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, phase and subject leaders, as well as governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, scrutinised their work and talked informally with pupils during breaktimes. The views of pupils were also considered during more formal discussions with inspectors. The 22 responses made by pupils to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire were taken into account.
- A wide range of the school's own information and documentation was studied, including the self-evaluation, improvement plans and records of the checks made on teaching and learning. Information about the performance management of staff and safeguarding practices was also examined alongside policy documentation.
- The opinions of staff were taken into account via 19 responses made to Ofsted's questionnaire and through formal and informal discussions.
- The 11 views expressed by parents in the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, were examined. Comments from parents communicated via free text and in face-to-face discussions during the inspection were also considered.

Inspection team

Fiona Manuel, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Heather Mensah	Ofsted Inspector
Phil Scott	Ofsted Inspector

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