

Four Dwellings Primary Academy

Quinton Road West, Quinton, Birmingham, West Midlands B32 1PJ

Inspection dates

7–8 February 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	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not meet the standards they should, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Until recently, the management board has not challenged leaders enough on some key aspects of the school's work. In particular, the accuracy of assessment information, the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and aspects of pupils' behaviour
- The curriculum is not sufficiently broad and balanced and its assessment arrangements are underdeveloped.
- Aspects of middle leadership are underdeveloped. Some staff require further help and guidance in managing pupils' behaviour.
- There is variability in the quality of teaching and assessment.
- The most able pupils are not consistently challenged in their work and made to think deeply with problems.
- There is too much inconsistency in the support provided to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- There is some low-level disruption in lessons which impacts on the progress pupils make. Pupils do not have sufficient awareness about the diversity of cultures in modern Britain.
- Staff working in the early years do not have sufficient knowledge about how to teach reading well. As a result, the gains pupils make in phonics do not follow through in their reading.
- Not enough pupils attend regularly or on time and leaders do not analyse this information well enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed headteacher has a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Phonics teaching is strong. As a result, pupils achieve well over time in the Year 1 screening check.
- The sports premium is used effectively.
- School leaders have worked hard to ensure stability in staffing during a time of change.
- Pupils enjoy homework. They complete it on time and take pride in their work.
- Safeguarding is effective.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in order to raise standards in reading and mathematics, by:
 - improving the accuracy of teacher assessment across the school, so that a true picture of attainment is used to inform teachers' planning and teaching
 - improving the level of support and guidance provided for teachers new to the profession
 - developing the teaching of reading in the early years
 - enhancing provision for the most able pupils so that they are challenged to think hard about their work
 - improving provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities so that they make better progress and are more engaged in learning
 - developing teacher subject knowledge particularly in reading and mathematics, by continuing the programme of staff training in these areas.
- Strengthen leadership and management, by:
 - ensuring that pupils have access to a suitably broad curriculum supported by reliable and consistent assessment arrangements
 - developing the role of middle leaders, especially leadership of special educational needs, behaviour, attendance; and continue to strengthen the leadership of English, mathematics and the curriculum.
 - ensuring that the management board brings more constructive challenge to the school's work and performance.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, by:
 - improving pupils' behaviour in lessons by equipping staff with effective classroom management strategies
 - raising pupils' awareness and understanding of the diversity of 21st-century Britain
 - making sure leaders analyse attendance data and implement measures to reduce unnecessary absence and lateness.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The recently appointed headteacher has a clear vision for the school. However, aspects of middle leadership are currently underdeveloped. While standards in English and mathematics are starting to rise, the curriculum still lacks sufficient breadth. In addition, expectations for pupils' behaviour and attendance could be higher.
- Leadership of special educational needs is underdeveloped. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make enough progress from their starting points and sometimes lose focus in class.
- The development of middle leadership is a key priority for the school. The headteacher is confident that she has the right people in place and is working to strengthen leadership of teaching and learning. In English and mathematics, for example, subject leaders are increasingly effective in their roles. Phase leaders, too, are ambitious for their phases. They understand the work they need to do to embed a broad and balanced curriculum and implement consistent assessment arrangements across the curriculum. Nevertheless, phase leadership in upper key stage 2 is stronger than that in lower key stage 2.
- The English and mathematics curriculums have now been revised and strengthened, which is helping to lift standards in basic skills. Beyond this, until recently, the school timetable did not offer a sufficiently broad and balanced curriculum. This has now been resolved. Recent changes in curriculum provision, including new resources and staff training, have contributed to pupils enjoying their lessons more and showing greater engagement. Nevertheless, practice across the school still varies and leaders have more work to do to ensure that pupils in all classes receive their full curriculum entitlement.
- Teaching staff have received training to improve their work. There are a number of coaching opportunities within the school and across the academy trust to develop staff knowledge and skills. For example, additional support has recently been put in place for those staff who are new to the teaching profession or in the early stages of their career. Even so, several staff require further support and guidance to help them to manage aspects of pupils' behaviour. Leaders have yet to secure good behaviour across the school and a consistent approach to discipline is required.
- Pupils' understanding of the cultural diversity of modern Britain is not well developed. In addition, their understanding of fundamental British values, while improving, is still patchy.
- It is clear that the recently appointed headteacher is having a positive impact on the work of the school. She has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is driving necessary improvements. She is well supported by the newly appointed management board and together they have secured a stable teaching staff, a high number of whom are in the early stages of their teaching career. There is a clear vision of 'Dream, Duty, Drive and Dazzle'. This motto steers improvement actions and supports the school's aim to ensure that pupils become confident, successful individuals ready for the challenges of secondary school and beyond.

- Performance management arrangements are effective and based around priorities in the school's improvement plan. Staff receive training and coaching appropriate to their needs and the stage they are at in their career. The academy trust ensures that this is brokered from within the trust or beyond in order to meet needs. Performance management is effectively used to tackle underperformance and improve teaching.
- The school's leaders, together with the management board, maintain a clear oversight of funding including the pupil premium and the PE and sport funding. They know that the achievement of disadvantaged pupils over time is not as good as that of other pupils nationally, and have worked hard to identify the barriers to success and ways to overcome these. They have produced a pupil premium strategy which they believe is fit for purpose and will bring about the improvements needed. Inspection evidence indicates they are on the right track. There has been a significant increase in the numbers of pupils participating in physical activity, and sport is promoted positively within the community to both pupils and adults.

Governance of the school

- The recently appointed management board has closely monitored the work of the school and provided support to senior leaders. However, until recently board members have not challenged leaders enough on some key aspects of the school's work. In particular, the accuracy of assessment information, the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and aspects of pupils' behaviour.
- The management board is working effectively with the headteacher. They have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- The management board and academy trust have ensured stability in staffing during a time of change at the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is an effective child protection policy in place. Staff are trained in safeguarding and child protection and know how to act on a concern. Three designated safeguarding leads have received training from Birmingham's local safeguarding board and attend multi-agency meetings as required. These key leaders ensure that appropriate records are kept and actions followed through, adhering to multi-agency plans.
- Health and safety risk assessments are in place and reviewed as necessary, including those for school visits and any challenging pupil behaviour which requires an assessment of risk. Staff employed or contracted to work at the school, including trustees and governors, are appropriately vetted and safer recruitment procedures are in place.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable across the school, particularly in classrooms taught by some teachers in the early stages of their

teaching career. In some classes, teachers do not reinforce expectations of conduct and there is low-level disruption in lessons, which impacts on pupils' learning, particularly in lower key stage 2. Elsewhere, behaviour is better as pupils are more focused on learning; they are not distracted and they complete the tasks set.

- There is inconsistency in the support provided to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This can lead to some off-task behaviour in lessons, which limits the progress these pupils make.
- In a few cases, teachers' subject knowledge is not wholly secure, especially in aspects of mathematics and the teaching of reading. This is not widespread and most teachers have a good grasp of subject knowledge. They use their recent training to improve their practice, for example by questioning pupils appropriately to further their learning and deepen their understanding.
- Teaching does not pick up on pupils' mistakes or successes to help teachers plan what to teach next. This restricts the quality of learning for some pupils. The most able pupils, for instance, are not challenged to do their very best. In several classes, teaching does not provide them with work that stretches their thinking or extends their skills. At the same time, lower-attaining pupils are pushed on before they have fully understood their work. While these pupils are now receiving more support in lessons to help them to catch up in their learning, they do not get sufficient opportunities to consolidate newly learnt skills.
- Recent improvements are beginning to have a positive impact on teaching and learning. These include the new approach to teaching writing, where there is evidence of more consistency in the school's approach; better use of teacher assessment to support pupils who are falling behind, particularly in Year 1 and Year 6; and new initiatives in reading where staff are consistently using newly introduced and effective strategies. Pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, are benefiting from the range of new approaches to teaching reading and, as a result, are more confident when tackling unknown words.
- Pupils value the feedback they receive from teachers. Pupils now have opportunities to reflect on their learning, and routinely edit and refine their work to improve it. Staff follow the school's marking policy and there is more consistency in the feedback pupils receive, particularly in Year 6.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) is effective and the teaching of reading across the school is improving, but it is still variable in quality. Pupils read regularly at home and at school. When pupils struggle with reading, this is often because phonics skills acquired in key stage 1 are not being used when reading.
- Homework is set in line with the school's policy and helps to consolidate pupils' learning. Homework books are of a good standard. Pupils take pride in their work and parents, while expressing mixed views about the value of homework, generally support the school's policy.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Most pupils are beginning to talk about and demonstrate an understanding of right and wrong, democracy, and respect, which they can link to the school's values. However they do not use the language of British values and this needs further development. Additionally, pupils' awareness of different cultures is only at the early stages of development. This hinders their readiness for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils' social, moral and spiritual development is a feature across the school with strong links to the school's values. Pupils respond positively to this. They show concern for others and are usually respectful to one another during the school day.
- Pupils say they feel happy and safe in school. The school promotes safety messages in a range of ways, including assemblies, circle-time sessions in class and visiting speakers from organisations such as the NSPCC. Staff are skilled in helping pupils to stay safe, for example they have been trained in keeping pupils safe from risks including child sexual exploitation and extremism. Pupils say they are confident in the way school manages and deals with any concerns they raise.
- Incidents of bullying are not common in school. Pupils are taught about bullying and falling out. Nevertheless, there is more the school can do to ensure that pupils understand the different forms bullying can take. Leaders are already working on this.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Despite the school's work to improve attendance, a higher than average proportion of pupils are absent from school and too many are persistently absent. School leaders have yet to analyse attendance data in sufficient depth to identify the reasons for poor attendance. This restricts their ability to plan solution-focused approaches to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and attendance rises.
- Punctuality is improving and fewer pupils now arrive late than used to be the case. The work of the school's attendance officer, the successful breakfast club provision, and the use of the school's mini-bus to collect pupils, have been particularly successful in improving punctuality. However, there is still more to be done to reduce lateness further.
- Pupils' behaviour varies across the school, particularly in lower key stage 2, and adults do not always adhere to the school's behaviour policy. This results in inconsistencies in the way pupils' behaviour is managed in class.
- During this inspection, some boisterous behaviour was observed on the lower key stage 2 playground, particularly when using soft play equipment during playtime and lunchtime. Adults are not always attentive enough when such incidents occur.
- Pupils speak to each other in a polite and respectful manner. They like the school's

'Good to Gold' approach for rewarding good behaviour whereby parents receive a text message when their child has met the standard.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2016, not enough Year 6 pupils met age-related expectations. Standards in reading and mathematics were some way below national figures. Current projections indicate an improvement on the 2016 national figures, and leaders are confident that Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve these. Leaders are addressing many of the previous shortcomings in the teaching of reading and mathematics, and progress in both these subjects is starting to improve.
- Work in Year 6 pupils' books indicates that assessment in this year group is secure. School leaders are now focusing on securing the accuracy of teacher assessment across the whole school, building on the recent work they have done on moderation. Newly implemented testing arrangements across the school are also helping to secure a more informed picture of current pupils' progress and attainment.
- The wider school curriculum is still being refined and developed in order to provide greater breadth. Therefore, pupils do not achieve as well as they might in a range of subjects beyond English and mathematics.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is a school priority, as not enough pupils are making expected progress. School leaders believe that they are taking effective steps to improve this, but they are yet to have impact. Inspection evidence concurs with the leaders' belief that effective steps are being taken.
- The most able pupils are not challenged enough and have not achieved as well as they should have in the past. Current projections are much higher and leaders believe pupils will achieve the forecasts set. Nevertheless, more needs to be done to ensure that those working above age-related expectations are challenged better in lessons.
- Attainment in key stage 1 has been broadly in line with national figures over time.
- Phonics teaching is a strength and pupils have continued to achieve well since the previous inspection. In 2016, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was above the national figure, and current projections are also positive.
- Leaders are taking effective action to tackle weaknesses in reading and pupils are making faster progress. Many older pupils read fluently and with confidence. They are now enjoying reading because they read often and adults in school spend time with them supporting their reading. Reading records maintained by staff and pupils' reading records provide evidence of improvement in reading across the school.
- The work in pupils' books and discussions with pupils suggest that recent improvements in the teaching of mathematics are impacting positively on pupils' understanding and the progress they make in this subject.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making steady progress in most year groups. Current projections are ambitious and senior leaders closely review strategies to support pupils who are not making the appropriate progress. Interventions are in place in line with

the school's pupil premium strategy, which include play therapy and reading interventions. Off-track pupils are receiving appropriate intervention to catch up, but this is yet to have a clear impact. Leaders are confident that there is an upward trend and disadvantaged pupils are now receiving the right levels of support to ensure success.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The post of the early years leader is vacant and the headteacher currently has oversight of the early years provision.
- Children in the early years are, on the whole, attentive, ready to learn and well behaved. However, occasional 'larking about' does impact on their learning. This happens when children lose focus because adults and resources are not always deployed in the most effective way.
- In contrast to the rest of the school, staff in the early years do not have sufficient knowledge about how to teach reading well in the early years. As a result, the gains pupils make in phonics do not follow through in reading.
- In other respects, curriculum provision is developing well. Speaking and listening activities engage pupils in their learning in a range of ways, including purposeful talk with play partners. Modelled and shared story writing teaches children about the structure of traditional tales. Children practice and consolidate learning in the writing area where they create their own story maps, and record the sequence of the story in their mark making. They enjoy reading their story maps to each other and to adults. Boys in particular enjoyed working in the writing area, which has been a focus for the school.
- Learning environments have improved significantly recently under the leadership of the new headteacher. Staff are working hard to develop their practice to ensure that planned activities support children's progress and develop their skills, both indoors and outdoors.
- Most children arrive at nursery with skills that are broadly typical for their age. The proportion achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception is close to the national average, and has improved over time. The headteacher has worked hard with staff to improve assessment practice and record keeping, such as that seen in children's learning journals. Work scrutiny by senior leaders is effective in bringing about improvements. The headteacher recognises that the focus now needs to be on broadening the range of assessment evidence and moderation to ensure accuracy of assessments.
- School leaders work hard to ensure effective partnerships with parents. Parents value the support they receive in helping their children quickly settle into school.
- Welfare requirements are met and children feel safe.

School details

Unique reference number	139131
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10020043

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	460
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Alan Parkinson
Headteacher	Ruth Laing
Telephone number	0121 464 3351
Website	www.fourwellingsprimaryacademy.org
Email address	headteacher@fourwellingsprimaryacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	19 November 2014

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.
- Four Dwellings Primary Academy is larger than the average primary school. Most children start in the full-time nursery class but some join in the Reception year from home or other pre-school provision.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.

- Four Dwellings converted to become an academy in January 2013. The school was judged to require improvement at its previous inspection in 2014.
- The school operates a breakfast club.
- The current headteacher took up post in September 2016.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes, accompanied by the headteacher. They looked at work in pupils' books and at assessments of pupils' current attainment and progress. The inspectors observed pupils at break and lunch times and at the school's breakfast club.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils, parents and staff at various times during the inspection, including break, lunchtime and at either end of the school day. They also had formal meetings with the school's leaders, other staff, the chair and other members of the management board. The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with the director of challenge and intervention at the multi-academy trust.
- The inspectors also took account of the views of 18 parents as expressed in Ofsted's online questionnaire and looked at the school's own recent survey of 176 parents.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including those published on the school's website, the school's records of recruitment and vetting checks, a range of documents relating to safeguarding pupils, the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement, and minutes of the management board.

Inspection team

Lorraine Lord, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Clair McNeill	Ofsted Inspector
Sofina Islam OBE	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free academy 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-academys-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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