

Yarnfield Primary School

Yarnfield Road, Tyseley, Birmingham, West Midlands, B11 3PJ

Inspection dates

4–5 April 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Standards across key stages 1 and 2 remain low at Yarnfield. Though the school was above the floor target in 2016, improvements are fragile.
- In 2016, less than a quarter of Year 6 pupils left Yarnfield at the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress scores from their starting points in Year 2 to the standard they reached in Year 6 were in the lowest 10% of schools nationally.
- Teaching is not yet consistently strong enough to reverse the legacy of underachievement. Pupils' progress remains too slow in some subjects. Teachers' planning is not routinely meeting pupils' needs across the curriculum.
- The trust and leaders have not ensured that safeguarding is effective. Checks on the school's systems for recruiting and vetting staff lack rigour. Though issues identified have been rectified, leaders must now maintain better oversight of this key area.
- Leaders have not been quick enough to respond to low standards. In particular, strategies for improving the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have been implemented too slowly.
- Assessment practice is weak. Systems do not take sufficient account of pupils' progress. As a result, leaders are not able to analyse or fully act upon any trends in pupils' achievement.
- Given the weaknesses in assessment, the trust and trust council are not sufficiently interrogating outcomes or holding leaders to account for standards across the school.
- The curriculum lacks breadth and balance. There is limited evidence of pupils' learning in some subjects. Evidence that does exist does not adequately demonstrate how pupils are challenged, or show how well they are acquiring new skills.
- Pupils' behaviour at lunchtime requires improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders are honest and frank. They are aware of the school's key priorities and are committed to raising standards.
- Staff enjoy working at Yarnfield and have strong relationships with pupils.
- The quality of teaching and leadership within the early years are a strength of the school. Children progress well into Year 1 and get off to a good start in their learning journey at Yarnfield.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by making sure:
 - leaders have greater oversight of safeguarding procedures and ensure that actions taken to remedy recent weaknesses are maintained
 - teachers have continued high quality training and support to help them address the significant legacy of underachievement
 - the trust and trust councillors are provided with accurate information about rates of progress and better hold leaders to account for standards across the school
 - teachers' planning of the wider curriculum provides pupils with challenge and opportunities to acquire skills, knowledge and understanding across a wide range of subjects, particularly in science
 - leaders further monitor the effectiveness of the school's work to promote pupils' understanding of fundamental British values.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment, and thereby outcomes for pupils, by ensuring that:
 - teachers have strong subject knowledge that allows them to fully address the gaps in pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar skills
 - teachers' planning better meets the needs of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, particularly in mathematics
 - assessment systems develop so that leaders and teachers can accurately monitor rates of progress and respond accordingly to any trends
 - leaders and teachers work together to further moderate the judgements made about pupils' learning.
- Improve personal development, welfare and behaviour by ensuring that:
 - adults offer greater support and guidance to pupils at lunchtime
 - pupils are supported further to take responsibility for their behaviour when not in lessons
 - leaders monitor any incidents of poor behaviour with greater precision and agree actions in response to their findings.

A review of governance is recommended in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders and the trust have not kept sufficient oversight of arrangements for safeguarding. They have not checked their systems regularly enough to ensure that statutory requirements are met.
- Leaders are managing a legacy of underachievement at Yarnfield. Inconsistent teaching over time and gaps in pupils' learning are hampering rates of progress. Though school priorities are accurate, improvements remain fragile at this stage. Leaders acknowledge that several key issues now need to be addressed with greater urgency.
- Leaders' judgements about the school's overall effectiveness are too generous at this stage of their development. Current judgements mask the key issues that remain within several aspects of the school's work. This is particularly the case with teaching, learning and assessment, and provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders have not yet ensured that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is strong enough fully to reverse historical underachievement. Recently appointed assistant principals now have scope to support teachers in developing their practice. However, teachers' planning and use of assessment remains weak. Leaders do not yet have confidence in the judgements that teachers arrive at in all subjects. Planning is not yet successfully meeting the needs of all learners.
- In too many instances, the specific needs of groups of pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are not adequately met. Leaders recognised that the leadership of special educational needs required significant development last year. Systems were introduced at the start of the academic year to address issues. Inspectors have judged that improvement work is now more effective and is appropriately responding to the needs of pupils. However, changes to this key area of school provision have been too slow. Pupils who had special educational needs and/or disabilities underachieved considerably in the past.
- Special educational needs funding has therefore not been used effectively over time to meet the needs of pupils. The picture has improved more recently and leaders have a better grasp on this aspect of school provision. New strategies are helping leaders track pupils' progress more clearly. Teachers are closely involved in formulating targets and establishing support for pupils.
- The curriculum has been redesigned and teachers use portfolios to show the journey of learning in a range of subjects. Though helpful in telling the story of learning, portfolios do not allow teachers or leaders to fully ascertain the progress that pupils are making. In many cases, it is not clear how adequately pupils are challenged. Senior leaders hold assessment information about pupils' attainment in science but have not interrogated its validity. Similarly, they are not yet at a point where they are able to articulate the relative strengths or weaknesses of rates of progress in science, or the wider curriculum across the school.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted across the curriculum and within school assemblies. During the inspection, pupils were observed demonstrating respect and listening attentively to visiting firefighters. Pupils learned about how to stay safe when travelling in a car. Pupils demonstrated strong conduct and displayed a clear enjoyment of singing.
- Pupils have some understanding of fundamental British values but this is not well established. Pupils are able to talk about their understanding of the values of democracy and individual liberty, but some of their knowledge is limited and is not secure.
- The use of pupil premium funding is well set out within the school's strategy. Leaders have identified the barriers that disadvantaged pupils face and have devised approaches to diminish any differences. In 2016, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 was well below that of other pupils nationally. School assessment information, and work in books, show that gaps are being addressed. In some cases, disadvantaged pupils are now performing at a higher level than those not eligible for funding. However, leaders have not yet refined assessment information to analyse fully progress rates across the school.
- The physical education and sports premium funding is supplemented by additional school funds. Leaders have significantly developed designated areas for physical activity in the school. The school's multi-use games area (MUGA) is well used by pupils and suitable for all weathers. An increasing proportion of pupils are now participating in extra-curricular activities. The school was very proud to win the Birmingham East football league last year.
- Leaders and trustees are honest and frank about what needs to be done next at Yarnfield. They are committed to reversing any underachievement. Their stronger work in devising strategies to support disadvantaged pupils, and developments within the early years, demonstrate what is achievable. This better work has not yet transferred to wider practice within the school.
- The school has made a wide range of key appointments to build capacity in leadership at all levels. Assistant principals lead their phases with enthusiasm and energy. They have an accurate view of the next steps that the teachers in their teams need to take to improve their practice further.
- Leaders have established a positive team of teachers within the school. The school's own surveys, and inspectors' discussions with staff, demonstrate that the majority of staff feel supported and valued in their work.
- Newly qualified teachers (NQTs), and those at the start of their career, are supported to establish themselves in their roles. NQTs report that they receive opportunities to share what they are doing and meet regularly with their designated mentors. Given the support networks that have been established, and the capacity of the wider trust, inspectors recommend that NQTs may continue to be appointed.
- Yarnfield is a member of the Ninestiles academy trust. The trust acknowledge the scale of work required and are supporting the school to address key priorities. Staff with specific expertise and skills have been seconded to the school to add capacity and bring about improvements. These staff are having a positive impact but underachievement has not yet been halted. Some improvements are fragile and are

inconsistent. This is particularly the case with teaching and the development of assessment systems. More time is needed to fully address key issues.

Governance of the school

- The trust has appointed a board of councillors to ensure that the academy is operating within the mission and ethos of the trust. The council monitors the overall effectiveness of the school. The trust has also established a primary standards group to monitor the school's effectiveness. This group is a new initiative. It is currently focused on exploring the strategies that trust schools are adopting to improve standards. Minutes from the most recent meeting of the primary standards group do not demonstrate how the actions of attendees are effective in helping to improve pupils' outcomes.
- Trust councillors:
 - are led by a chair who has considerable expertise and knowledge and visits the school regularly to work with leaders
 - like leaders, understand the school's priorities and have shaped action plans to address underachievement
 - agree actions within their meetings but do not adequately address the scale of some issues across the school
 - though aware of outcomes, do not have access to clear information about rates of pupils' progress.
- The arrangements for governance, including the work of the trust council and wider trust, are not ensuring that leaders are adequately held to account for standards at Yarnfield.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Leaders and the trust have not kept sufficient oversight of arrangements for safeguarding.
- A number of statutory recruitment and vetting checks were found to be incomplete during the inspection. Leaders and trustees were quick to address these issues. Further work is now required to establish monitoring systems and procedures to ensure that effective arrangements are maintained.
- The school has adopted new systems to track any concerns that staff may have about pupils' welfare. These systems are understood and well used by staff.
- Pupils that inspectors spoke to say that they feel safe. Leaders have established special programmes within the curriculum to help pupils learn about risks and respond to them appropriately. This includes drama workshops about safe communities, work with the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), and online e-safety meetings for parents.
- The school engages effectively with other agencies and parents to keep pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teachers' planning, subject knowledge and assessment practice is not yet strong enough to bring about the rapid improvements required at Yarnfield. There is capacity for further development given the skills of the assistant principals. However, the overall quality of teaching is inconsistent.
- Teachers' planning is not routinely meeting the needs of different groups of pupils. This is particularly the case for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Observations of teaching and scrutinies of pupils' work show that teachers are not taking sufficient account of pupils' different starting points. Some pupils have gaps in their learning that make it difficult for them to fully access the activities planned for them. This is particularly evident in mathematics.
- Some technical aspects of writing are not well taught across the school. Across different year groups, some pupils do not successfully transfer basic spelling, punctuation and grammar skills into their writing.
- Assessment practice is not yet secure. Systems have not been developed to take full account of the progress that pupils make over time. Teachers make judgements about the attainment of pupils using a range of strategies. These judgements are used to draw comparisons between groups across the school. Current information indicates that some year groups are making gains in their learning but that this varies across different phases. In the current Year 6, the proportion of pupils at age-related expectations in mathematics is markedly lower than reading and writing. The precise progress being made by pupils across the school is unclear. When asked about any trends or variation in assessment information, leaders are unsure about the extent to which teachers' judgements are fully accurate.
- Teachers and leaders have worked hard to develop an approach to writing that engages pupils and meets their needs. These approaches require further refinement but they are providing pupils with a better starting point for structuring their thoughts and ideas.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are strong across the school. Pupils' conduct within lessons and their attitude towards learning is broadly positive. Where teachers' questioning is effective, pupils engage in lively discussions about their learning.
- There are pockets of stronger teaching across the school. For example, some teachers' planning focuses carefully on developing the mathematical reasoning skills of pupils and encourages them to solve complex problems.
- Leaders have redesigned their approach to homework to provide pupils with greater choice and encourage participation from families. Pupils are encouraged to undertake projects and make choices about the activities that they complete.
- The teaching of phonics is a strength of the school. In the early years and key stage 1, phonics is taught effectively and is leading to strong outcomes in the Year 1 screening check. This proficiency in phonics should lead to improved outcomes in reading and writing over time. It is an important foundation for future improvements within the school.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate as arrangements for safeguarding are ineffective.
- Where teaching is stronger within the school, pupils have confidence and they want to do well in their learning. However, where teaching is weak, pupils can lack confidence and their learning attitudes are not as positive.
- Pupils have an effective understanding of what constitutes bullying and they feel that staff are quick to address any issues that they raise. Pupils say that they know how to stay safe online.
- Older pupils in the school are developing mature views about the world. They increasingly understand what is right and wrong. Pupils know that derogatory language should not be tolerated.
- There is a clear understanding from some pupils that people have the right to be treated equally and must not be discriminated against. In a discussion, one pupil commented, 'People can choose their own path in life and have a right to decide which religion to follow.' This shows that the school's work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is having a positive impact. Some pupils have a good understanding of other faiths and cultures.
- The promotion of fundamental British values is not as strong. Pupils are not yet able to talk confidently about these values, or clearly describe what they mean to them.
- Pupil leadership opportunities are well planned. The school council is proactive and is very positive about how it influences improvements in the school. Pupils are provided with opportunities to develop their leadership skills. For example, the school has appointed sports captains and a head girl and head boy.
- Pupils have an effective understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and maintain a balanced diet. During the inspection, one younger pupil commented, 'I know that the rice on my plate is carbohydrate and the fish is good for me because it has protein in it.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Some pupils do not yet take full responsibility for their behaviour when they are playing independently.
- There is a marked difference between behaviour in classrooms and behaviour on the playground. At lunchtime, inspectors observed some disorderly behaviour, particularly as pupils moved around the school grounds. Some staff do not intervene quickly enough or use the school's behaviour policy to address any issues.
- Pupils and teachers also share this view. In discussions with inspectors, they recognised that behaviour is not as good at social times as it is during lessons.

- Leaders have implemented systems to support the management of behaviour in classrooms. These systems are having a positive impact. The frequency of incidents is decreasing. However, leaders are not fully analysing information to check for any trends or patterns in pupils' behaviour.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons. This is especially the case when learning is more stimulating. Where teaching is not as strong, some pupils become passive or are distracted from their learning.
- The leadership of attendance is effective. Leaders analyse data carefully and respond appropriately to any concerns. Attendance dropped slightly below the national average last year. However, the school's effective work is resulting in swift improvements and attendance is now almost in line with national levels. Attendance is also improving for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Outcomes across key stages 1 and 2 have been stubbornly low for a number of years. In 2016, the school's rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 2 were in the bottom 10% of schools nationally. In the same year, outcomes in key stage 1 were also well below those found nationally.
- It is difficult to determine current rates of progress due to the limited development of assessment systems. However, the school does monitor the attainment of pupils. Assessment information shows variability across the school. This is particularly the case in lower key stage 2. Leaders have responded to this variation by taking steps to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The impact is not yet known.
- Work in books shows that some pupils are making progress from their different starting points. However, there is variation for different year groups and progress is not yet rapid enough. In some cases, the gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills are significantly wide. Too many pupils in Year 6 do not have the skills that they need to help them master mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are now getting a better level of support than was previously in place. Prior to September 2016, this group of pupils' needs were not adequately met. Leaders have not responded to this weakness quickly enough. Progress rates for pupils in 2016 were very low.
- The teaching of science and other subjects is not robust. In 2016, only 37% pupils met the expected standard in science at the end of Year 6. Leaders did not track or monitor pupils' progress in this subject area adequately. Though teachers are keeping records of assessment in science, their judgements, and evidence of pupils' progress, require more oversight and monitoring to ensure rigour.
- Disadvantaged pupils' needs are carefully outlined within the school's strategy for the pupil premium. Additional support and intervention programmes are helping these pupils diminish the difference between their achievement and that of others, both within school and nationally. In 2016, the gap in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally was significant. Assessment information and work in books shows that gaps are being addressed. In some cases, disadvantaged pupils now outperform their peers.

- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported in the early years upon joining school. The school provides additional support for pupils as they move through the school. The support effectively ensures that pupils are equipped with the skills to understand new words before new subjects are introduced in class. Despite this effective intervention, underachievement still exists for this group of pupils and they will require more support to accelerate their skills further.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are beginning to make better rates of progress across the school. This is evident in books and in lesson observations. In one Year 6 class, pupils were being very well supported to develop their understanding of statistics as the teacher skilfully helped them to interpret a pie chart. As a result, pupils were successfully interpreting complex information. One group of pupils was encouraged and supported to generate problems for their peers to solve.
- Phonics outcomes continue to improve across the school. Outcomes have been in line with, or above, national levels for the last three years. These successes are also evident for current pupils. The teaching of phonics is effective.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development is strong in the early years given children's different starting points. Outcomes dipped a little last year as a result of new children joining the school at a late point in the academic year. Teaching and leadership within the early years is highly effective.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- The early years provision is inadequate due to ineffective safeguarding arrangements at a whole-school level.
- Children in the early years enjoy coming to school. Staff know the children very well. As a result, relationships are strong and the children are happy.
- Children's behaviour is very strong; they show a high level of independence. Adults are highly skilful in their roles and help children to be self-assured learners.
- A high proportion of children enter the school with skills that are below those typical for their age. Some children enter with little or no spoken English or with some speech and language difficulties. Due to very effective leadership and high expectations, children make at least typical rates of progress. Some children make rapid progress. Additional funding is used effectively to ensure that disadvantaged children achieve well from their starting points.
- The early years leader has a clear vision and very detailed improvement plans. These plans ensure that teaching has a consistently positive impact on children's learning. The leader regularly monitors the effectiveness of plans and works with her team to constantly develop and enhance practice.
- The analysis of assessment information is very effective. Staff make accurate assessments of what children can do and carefully track progress over time. Staff use this valuable information to plan activities that closely match the needs of children. Staff also work with other practitioners across the multi-academy trust to moderate assessment information and quality assure their work.

- Teachers' planning takes into account what children can do and what they need to do next. This leads to challenging and interesting learning activities that support children's readiness for Year 1. The development of writing is a particular strength. This is a result of high-quality planning and a carefully organised environment. During a lesson observation, children were exploring different textures and shapes. One boy wrote on his paper, 'the red circle is hard'. He was motivated and engaged by the different challenges around the classroom. Challenges like this secure rapid rates of progress.
- The curriculum captures children's imagination and promotes a sense of awe and wonder. For example, in Nursery, children were learning about the letter 'c'. The teacher showed children a caterpillar and skilfully introduced new language such as 'cocoon' and 'chrysalis'. Children were engrossed and enthralled.
- The learning environment is highly stimulating for children and supports their learning. Children's learning in art, writing and mathematics is celebrated and displayed with pride.
- Children who speak English as an additional language are very well supported. They acquire language through the rich environment and well-targeted teaching. Children also receive additional support to boost their skills.
- Some activities do not consistently offer high levels of challenge for the most able children. These children are not yet being fully supported to help them reach higher levels of attainment by the end of the Reception Year.
- In the strongest teaching, staff's questioning is particularly effective. However, this strong practice is not yet used consistently across the early years.
- Though improving, the outdoor environment is not as appealing or engaging as the classrooms.
- Staff communicate with parents very well and keep them up to date about their child's progress. Parents are warmly welcomed into the setting. Parents are also provided with opportunities to find out how they can support learning at home.

School details

Unique reference number	139378
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10032604

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	693
Appropriate authority	Ninestiles Academy trust
Chair	Ian Carnell
Principal	Adrian Davies
Telephone number	0121 6930 362
Website	www.yarnfieldprimary.org.uk
Email address	adrian.davies@yarnfieldprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 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.
- Yarnfield is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school has been a member of the Ninestiles Academy Trust since July 2013. The school's overall effectiveness is monitored by the trust. The trust has also established a council to support the monitoring of the school. This council is led by a chair and other nominated councillors. The school receives support from the trust. The school's senior leadership team comprises a principal and two vice-principals. The trust have seconded two further vice-principals to the school to support the development of English and mathematics.

- The Ninestiles Academy Trust comprises three secondary schools and four primary schools.
- Four assistant principals were appointed to the school in September 2016.
- The school has three classes in each year group and three family groups in Nursery.
- Approximately half of pupils are eligible for free school meals.
- The school runs a breakfast club each morning.
- Over 80% of the school's population come from ethnic minority backgrounds. Around two thirds of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities without a statement of support is slightly above average. The proportion of pupils with an education health care plan or statement is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 29 lessons or part lessons. The majority of these were conducted jointly with leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the principal and a vice-principal to discuss the school's self-evaluation and school development plans. The inspection team outlined key lines of enquiry that the inspection activity would focus on.
- Pupils' books were scrutinised in lessons observations and a separate book scrutiny was held on the second day of the inspection. This was conducted with leaders.
- Inspectors met parents on the school playground and took account of the responses received via free text. There were insufficient responses to Parent View to generate a report. The school provided the inspection team with an analysis of results from a parent questionnaire conducted in October 2016.
- Inspectors reviewed the five responses from the pupil survey and 17 responses to the staff survey. The lead inspector met with NQTs and other staff that wished to share their views about school at lunchtime on the second day of the inspection.
- Inspectors met with the leaders of the following areas to discuss the impact of their work: English, safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and inclusion. Inspectors reviewed a wide range of school documentation, including self-evaluation, development plans, assessment information, the single central record, electronic and paper-based child protection files, attendance data, training certificates, policies, monitoring records and information relating to performance management.
- Inspectors heard pupils from key stage 1 read.
- The lead inspector met with trust councillors including the chair and a staff councillor. A meeting was also held with the trust's chief executive officer.

Inspection team

Jonathan Keay, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Matt Meckin	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lisa Buffery	Ofsted Inspector
Janet Satchwell	Ofsted 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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