

Fernwood Primary School

Arleston Drive, Wollaton, Nottingham, NG8 2FZ

Inspection dates

27–28 June 2018

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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and the governing body have an over generous view of aspects of the school. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's work is not precise enough.
- The information gathered through the school's assessment system is not used with sufficient accuracy to ensure that all pupils make the progress that they should.
- Currently, some of the most able pupils do not make the progress that they should in order to attain the higher standard that they are capable of, particularly in key stage 2.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not attain as well as their peers. The pupil premium strategy is insufficiently focused on ensuring these pupils progress as they should.
- When the learning is either too easy or too difficult, pupils lose concentration. This reduces the progress that they make.
- Too often, pupils spend time unnecessarily repeating learning that they have already acquired rather than being taught new things. This impedes their progress.
- Teachers do not question pupils to probe their understanding, develop their use of language and extend their learning often enough.
- The quality of teachers' assessment of some pupils' writing is inconsistent. In some cases, it is over generous.

The school has the following strengths

- The wider curriculum provides pupils with rich learning experiences. Pupils study a range of subjects including music and the arts.
- The early years provision is good. Children are engaged in stimulating activities that sustain their interest. They are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.
- Pupils' conduct around school is exemplary. They are polite to adults and to each other. Routines are well established and understood. Incidents of poor behaviour or of bullying are rare.
- Pupils are proud of the culturally diverse school community. Pupils appreciate the extensive efforts taken to prepare them well for life in modern Britain.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - all leaders and the governing body are more accurate in the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work, particularly in relation to pupils' progress
 - an effective pupil premium strategy is implemented that removes the barriers to learning for this group of pupils, including in the early years.

- Improve the quality of teaching learning and assessment so that outcomes for pupils improve by ensuring that:
 - the information from the assessment systems is used to set tasks that support all groups of pupils to make good progress so that they attain as well as they should
 - the assessment of writing, particularly in Years 2 and 6 is accurate for all pupils, particularly those attaining at greater depth in key stage 1 and at a higher standard at the end of key stage 2
 - all teachers use their knowledge of their pupils' achievements, to plan work that consistently meets their needs and challenges them
 - teachers develop their questioning skills and strategies further in order to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding.

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

- Leaders and the governing body have believed that aspects of the school's performance are better than they are. They have not made sure that the most able pupils, in particular, but not exclusively, make good progress in order to attain the higher standard.
- Leaders' plans for improvement and their use of the school's assessment system are not focused sharply enough on ensuring that some pupils, particularly the most able and disadvantaged pupils make the progress they should.
- The school's pupil premium strategy is not precise enough. It does not fully address the barriers to learning experienced by this group of pupils. Their learning plans lack rigour or clear targets. Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve or attend as well as others in the school, including in the early years.
- Leaders know every pupil who has special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities very well. They believe, and are passionate to ensure, that these pupils are fully involved in the life of the school. Pupils and their parents value this highly. The Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCo) carefully consider and successfully identify pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. They recognise and are focused on pupils' progress, especially those pupils not making expected progress. However their overview of the provision is not yet as strategic as is needed.
- There is a comprehensive and well-understood process to manage teachers' performance. Teacher targets are linked to school priorities. Teachers are encouraged by leaders to collect evidence of their professional development, including the training they receive. Some targets that are set for teachers are not quantifiable and are therefore difficult to measure.
- Although aspects of core subjects are not planned well enough to make sure all groups of pupils make good progress, the wider curriculum provides imaginative opportunities across a range of subjects. The pupils benefit from additional learning linked to the arts, music and experiences including involvement in the local community. Learning is extended outside of normal school hours and pupils take advantage of the many organised activities and clubs. This includes the chess club, where often pupils participate in regional chess competitions. Members of the gardening club were keen to inform inspectors of the names of vegetables and herbs they grow, how they would be used in cooking and the challenges of looking after these in the recent heatwave. They were clearly loving their learning.
- Pupils are supported well to develop a good understanding of life within modern Britain. The pupil council is appreciated by pupils as a way in which they have a voice in school, they recognise this as a democratic process. Pupils are involved in charity work linked to the local community, including for a local food bank and raising funds for terminally ill children.
- Leaders are proud of the culturally rich school community. Pupils learn about major world faiths other than their own. They frequently benefit from special events, for example the Faith and Culture days. Pupils told inspectors how proud they were of this

aspect of their school and how appreciative they are of learning about differing faiths and cultures.

- The physical education (PE) and sports funding is spent wisely and supports pupils to participate in many sporting activities. The sports coach has enhanced the PE curriculum and provided professional development opportunities for teaching and for support staff. Pupils told inspectors that they thoroughly valued the many chances they had to play sports and be involved in different activities.
- The executive headteacher and other leaders and teachers are involved in partnership working with the Nottingham Schools Trust. Leaders ensure that teaching staff and leaders at all levels gain regular opportunity to support and to network with colleagues across the city in order to build expertise for the benefit of pupils.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is highly committed to the school and to continuing to improve its own effectiveness. The governors are a skilled group. They have the abilities needed to challenge leaders. But, they have believed that aspects of the school are better than they are.
- Governors have not made sure that an effective pupil premium strategy is in place and that these additional government funds are having the impact needed to improve the progress and raise standards for disadvantaged pupils. Work is undertaken however it is insufficiently precise and not focused enough on the progress this group of pupils should make in order to attain as they could.
- The chair of the governing body has shown considerable commitment. Committee structures are appropriate and financial matters are dealt with well. School budgets are healthy. Governors' support to move two federated schools to one primary school has been efficient

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the potential dangers when using the internet or mobile phones. They spoke confidently about the actions they would take to keep safe, including how they would inform an adult they trust should someone they do not know request their personal information.
- The procedures in place to ensure pupils' welfare are appropriate and well understood by all staff. Training is of high quality and includes an induction for all those new to the school, including volunteers. Staff are knowledgeable about many of the potential risks for pupils and how these should be dealt with, including matters linked to preventing radicalisation and to child sexual exploitation.
- The safeguarding policy meets requirements and governors regularly review its implementation to ensure it is effective.
- The strong links with external agencies enable good support for the pupils and families that have most need. External agencies are involved immediately a serious concern comes to light in order that everything is done to keep pupils safe.

- Recruitment processes are appropriate. Minor administrative issues in relation to the school single central record were addressed during the inspection. The school business manager is skilled and well organised. She has plans in place to rightly refine these systems further.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- In some lessons, teachers do not pitch learning with sufficient challenge to ensure that the most able pupils make the progress needed to attain as well as they should.
- Too often, pupils spend time waiting to learn new things. In some instances, pupils repeat what they already know before they move to the more challenging learning that they are capable of. This weakens their progress.
- At times teachers do not use assessment information to plan to meet the learning needs of some pupils, this includes the most able pupils.
- Some pupils do not transfer their strong literacy skills to subjects other than literacy and mathematics. Some teachers' marking does not consistently meet leaders' expectations. This was particularly evident in pupils' topic work.
- There is inconsistency in the expectations of teachers as to the presentation of pupils' work. At times pupils' progress is inhibited because of poor presentation and a lack of accuracy, particularly within literacy.
- Some teachers use effective questioning strategies to encourage pupils, to challenge their thinking and to extend their responses. Inspectors observed particularly strong evidence of this in key stage 1. However, in some lessons opportunities to challenge pupils are missed. Where the quality of questioning is not as strong, pupils answer without the care and insight they are capable of.
- Pupils move quickly and smoothly to their next task or to learning in a different subject. Teachers give clear instructions and so that pupils know exactly what to do next. Routines are well practiced and are well-understood. This helps to make the most of the time available.
- The teaching of phonics is a strength. Teachers engage pupils in a wide variety of activities to help to develop and deepen their understanding of the sounds that letters make.
- Some teachers exhibit strong subject knowledge. Some use this well to extend pupils' vocabulary and encourage the ambitious use of language. In Year 4, for example, teaching was helping pupils to enrich their descriptive text. One pupil had proudly written, 'darkness invades silently'.
- Where the learning is challenging pupils are positive and hungry to learn. Inspectors saw examples of this in a Year 6 mathematics lesson where pupils were keenly planning a marketing and finance strategy for their business venture.
- Teachers' skilfully display pupils' work and use the classroom environment successfully to reward pupils' achievements, to encourage positive attitudes and to provide learning prompts and ideas. Pupils said that they were proud of their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils appreciate their teachers and the range of opportunities provided for them. They said that they had many people in school to whom they could turn if they had a problem and that they thoroughly appreciated this. They said that they were proud of their school.
- Pupils who inspectors met said that bullying is rare. If 'falling out' happens it is quickly resolved by teachers. Pupils told inspectors that they felt safe and happy in their school.
- Pupils listen carefully, concentrate on their work and respond very positively if they are asked a question by their teacher. However, when a group of pupils is set a task that is either too easy or too hard they quickly lose interest and become distracted.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The decoration and displays of pupils' work create an exciting and motivational place for pupils to learn. Pupils respect all areas of the school and appreciate that their achievements are valued and visibly celebrated by their teachers.
- Pupils wear their uniforms with pride. They are keen to speak with peers and to visitors about how positive they feel about their education and the care and concern they receive from their teachers.
- Pupils are extremely well behaved around school. At break time and lunch time, they cooperate with each other and show great respect for their peers. Some pupils told inspectors however that sometimes their peers could be silly and distract them in lessons and that this was frustrating.
- Pupils' attendance is better than the national average. The proportion of pupils that are persistently absent is reducing. Extensive steps are taken to ensure pupils are in school and are learning. In spite of much successful work however, disadvantaged pupils continue to attend less well than others in the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Children make a good start in the early years and are well prepared for Year 1. Some pupils continue to make strong progress in key stage 1. A greater proportion of pupils have high starting points than the national average, when they move into key stage 2. There are too many able pupils that are not building on this strong foundation.
- In 2017, the progress of most able pupils at the end of key stage 2 was below the national average in mathematics and reading. Pupils made average progress in writing.

- The proportion of pupils attaining the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was below the national average in 2017. This does not reflect strong progress for these pupils.
- Currently, some of the most able pupils are not making the progress they should and, therefore, will not reach the higher standard, of which they are capable, by the end of key stage 2.
- Disadvantaged pupils, particularly the most able disadvantaged pupils, do not attain as well as others within the school.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in each of reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 was above the national average.
- Standards in Year 1 phonics are strong. In 2016 and 2017 the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard was well above the national average. Current pupils are predicted to attain at similar levels.
- Leaders' information indicates that pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2018 will substantially improve, including the proportion of pupils who will achieve at a higher standard.
- Leaders' information indicates that pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 will improve in 2018. A greater proportion of pupils are predicted by leaders to achieve at a greater depth.
- Leaders' actions to improve standards in reading for a group of pupils who speak English as an additional language has proved successful.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders have an accurate picture of the current strengths and areas for development in the early years. They communicate well with parents. They ensure that the vast majority of pupils are prepared well for key stage 1.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of the early years was above the national average in 2016 and 2017. Leader's most recent information suggest that outcomes will continue to be above the national average in 2018.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Leaders ensure there are a wide range of activities that link to, and then sustain, children's interests. Inspectors observed a group of children using their imagination and adventurous language to create a 'control panel'. The children were thoroughly captivated.
- The classrooms and outdoor areas are bright, exciting and interesting. Staff are friendly and are welcoming of the children and their parents. This helps children to settle in well. They are keen to explore and find out as much as possible. Parents speak highly of the staff and the work they do with their children in the early years.
- The procedures in place to keep pupils safe and well cared for are effective. Relationships between adults and children are extremely positive. Well-structured routines and procedures mean that children move confidently and safely around the learning spaces. They behave extremely well.

- Learning journals do not yet precisely evaluate and then identify children's next learning steps. Some of the steps identified lack precision and so are not as helpful as they could be.
- At times, opportunities are missed by adults to question and probe children's understanding, develop their language acquisition and extend their learning. Leaders are aware of the need to improve further this aspect of the provision.
- Some disadvantaged children do not attain as well as other children. The number of disadvantaged children is low. Many of these children make accelerated progress within the provision. However, fewer children than their peers attain at a good level of development.

School details

Unique reference number	142223
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	10048102

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

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	1110
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Cumberland
Executive Principal	Amanda Austin
Telephone number	01159155727
Website	www.fernwoodprimary.co.uk
Email address	www.fernwood primary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is a much larger than the averaged sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils attending the school is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below national figures.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is larger than the national average.
- In 2016 and 2017, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school is part of the Nottingham Schools Trust. The executive headteacher is a trustee.
- The number of pupils on roll is increasing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 27 lessons across key stage 1, 2 and in the early years. A range of meetings were held with senior leaders, the chair of governors and six further members of the governing body. With members of the senior leadership team, inspectors conducted extensive reviews of pupils' work in key stage 1 and 2. A large sample of the writing of Year 2 and 6 pupils was scrutinised. Inspectors appraised a range of information relating to pupils' progress, leaders' self-evaluation and school improvement strategy. Further meetings were held with the extended leadership team, including two special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCo), two leaders of teaching and learning, the early years leader and leaders with the responsibility to oversee the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Pupils were spoken with formally in lessons and more informally at break time and lunch time. An inspector conducted a safeguarding check of the school sites and reviewed the arrangements to safeguard pupils' safety and welfare. Checks of the single central record were undertaken. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with the chief executive officer (CEO) of Nottingham Schools Trust. Inspectors considered the 181 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View. There were no responses to the pupil or staff surveys.

Inspection team

Jayne Ashman, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Christopher Mansell	Ofsted Inspector
Shaheen Hussain	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Lewis	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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