

Glebefields Primary School

Sandgate Road, Tipton, West Midlands DY4 0SX

Inspection dates

19–20 March 2019

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The good standard of education in the school has not been maintained since the previous inspection. As a result of particularly challenging circumstances, leaders and governors have not addressed areas for improvement effectively. Governors have not ensured that acting leaders have received sufficient support to cover for the substantive headteacher's absence.
- Attainment and progress in mathematics by the end of key stage 2 in 2018 were considerably below the national average. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their problem-solving and reasoning skills. At key stage 1, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been below the national averages for the last three years.
- Teaching is not good enough across the school. Some teachers do not have an accurate understanding of what pupils can and should achieve. This leads to low expectations, particularly for the most able pupils. Leaders do not have an accurate picture of pupils' progress and attainment.
- Some teachers do not pick up on pupils' misconceptions and adapt their teaching to meet pupils' needs or show them how to improve their work, to close the gaps in pupils' learning. This is due in part to some teachers' weak subject knowledge.
- New approaches to the teaching of writing and handwriting have not yet had significant impact on pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher has put in place a more strategic approach to improvement planning. Middle leaders are now more involved in monitoring and improving the quality of teaching.
- Pupils behave very well and are a credit to the school. They are enthusiastic and love reading. They say that bullying is rare. Safeguarding is effective. Parents and carers value the support staff provide to keep children safe.
- Children in the early years settle quickly and make strong progress from their starting points.
- By the end of key stage 2 in 2018, pupils made exceptional progress in reading from their starting points. The proportion of pupils that achieved the expected standard in reading was above the national average.
- The wider curriculum is enriched through exciting trips and visits. The school has achieved awards for physical education (PE) and science.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress, and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported to make strong progress across the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that governors:
 - develop their skills further so that they hold leaders to account more effectively
 - provide leaders with the support they need to drive improvement more effectively.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers:
 - identify and address pupils' misconceptions quickly, adapting their teaching to pupils' needs more effectively
 - receive the targeted support and challenge they need to improve their subject knowledge and skills.
- Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that outcomes improve rapidly by ensuring that all teachers:
 - have an accurate understanding and high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve, particularly the most able
 - help pupils to understand better how to improve their work
 - embed the new approaches to the teaching of writing and handwriting
 - build in more frequent opportunities for pupils to consolidate their learning and apply their skills to problem-solving and reasoning activities in mathematics.

An external review of governance 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

- At the time of the previous inspection, the substantive headteacher had been absent for some time with a serious illness. Shortly before this inspection, the headteacher, very sadly, died. Staff, pupils and governors have naturally been extremely upset by her death. The deputy headteacher has been acting headteacher throughout much of the last two academic years and the assistant headteacher has been acting deputy headteacher since September 2018. Unfortunately, with a depleted leadership capacity, standards have slipped in some areas, and in other areas have not improved as they should have done. Governors have not ensured that leaders received the support they needed to bring about improvements.
- Despite these challenges, the acting headteacher and the wider leadership team have shown great resilience and commitment. The school's development plan now reflects the priorities for improvement identified in the school's self-evaluation and at the last inspection. Working parties have been established to address each priority. Subject leaders are now more involved in monitoring and improving the quality and effectiveness of teaching in their subjects. More experienced leaders work closely with other leaders who are new to their roles to develop their skills. Capacity for strong future leadership is developing, but further support from an experienced school leader is needed. Governors, with the support of the school improvement adviser, have started the process to appoint a new headteacher. Leaders are establishing, once again, an ambitious culture.
- Leaders have ensured that additional funding such as the pupil premium and the PE and sports premium is used effectively to support pupils' achievement. Through links with West Bromwich Albion football club, pupils enjoy workshops which support their personal development, as they work towards becoming Albion Ambassadors. Pupils consider this award to be a real honour.
- As a result of the school's work to promote fundamental British values, pupils have a well-developed understanding of respect, tolerance, individual liberty, the rule of law and the important part these values play in modern Britain. Pupils have many opportunities to take on additional responsibility. They vote for their peers to be elected to roles such as milk monitor or corridor monitor. Pupils are proud of their school and the roles they play. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about a wide range of different faiths, such as Sikhism, Islam and Judaism, through visits to places of worship. Various other trips broaden pupils' horizons beyond their immediate community and enrich the curriculum. For example, pupils recently enjoyed a trip to the theatre in London to see a production of 'The Lion King'.
- Leaders, teachers and other staff are committed to supporting pupils to overcome barriers to learning, such as lack of confidence or low aspirations. However, the school's hard work to improve pupils' self-esteem, confidence and resilience is not always matched by equally ambitious academic expectations.

Governance of the school

- Governance requires improvement. Recent events have been extremely challenging, and while governors have shown care and concern for the well-being of staff and pupils, they have not done enough to drive improvements and prevent standards from slipping. Governors are committed to the school and the community. Many are long-serving and experienced school governors, and some have relevant expertise they can bring to bear in the role. A governors' action plan is in place, but this lacks the refinement necessary to ensure that governance is strong enough to hold leaders to account for improving standards. Governors are now starting to request more detailed information from leaders, but this is a relatively recent development.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding staff are committed and tenacious in following up on any concerns. They know pupils' families and the school community very well. The parent support worker is available to speak to parents at the school gate every morning. Staff visit pupils' homes to check on pupils' well-being and offer support to parents if they need it. The rigorous approach to safeguarding reflects the caring ethos of the school. Staff know that 'it could happen here' and they do not hesitate to raise any concerns about pupils' safety.
- Parents say that they know their children are safe in school. One parent's view reflected the view of many: 'Parents and teachers alike have a common goal in keeping our kids safe, making sure they learn as much as they possibly can but most of all enjoy their school life and be happy.'

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is not always effective. Many of the areas for improvement from the previous inspection remain. Those teachers who require specific, focused support to improve their subject knowledge or their teaching skills have not been adequately supported or challenged to improve their practice. More recently, this is starting to change.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils' work are not always accurate. As a result, leaders do not have an accurate enough understanding of the progress pupils are making. Leaders have recognised this as an area for improvement. They have revised the school's assessment system and devised assessment 'ladders' which are starting to help teachers understand more specifically what pupils need to know and understand in English and mathematics in each year. However, this is at the early stages of implementation. Teachers do not yet challenge all pupils sufficiently, particularly the most able.
- Where teachers' subject knowledge is strong, teachers have a much better understanding of how well pupils are achieving. They are able to adapt their teaching to address gaps in pupils' knowledge effectively. Strong evidence of this was seen in pupils' books and in lessons in specific classes. Where this is happening on a regular basis, it is having a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- However, where teachers' subject knowledge is less secure, particularly in mathematics,

teachers do not pitch lessons at the right level to meet pupils' needs effectively. Pupils are not given enough opportunity to solve problems and practise their skills in mathematics. In some cases, teaching covers low-level work that only a few pupils need to revisit. In other cases, teachers make assumptions about what pupils know based on what has been taught, rather than checking whether pupils had embedded their learning before moving on. Where this happens, pupils drift off task because they become disengaged and learning time is wasted. In some cases where pupils are asked to improve their work, they are not given enough guidance to be able to do this effectively. As a result, pupils do not make sufficient progress in these classes.

- Many staff have benefited from effective professional development, which is beginning to have an impact on standards. For example, the subject leader for science attended a science teaching conference and led the school's successful application for the School Science Award.
- Leaders have provided support for teachers to plan together and have put in place initiatives to address specific whole-school priorities, such as improving writing. This is starting to have an impact on pupils' writing skills. However, where teachers need to improve their practice, leaders have not challenged this effectively. Leaders have not ensured that teachers' professional development is sufficiently targeted on individual areas for improvement, such as developing subject knowledge. As a result, teaching is not as effective as it needs to be to close the considerable gaps in some pupils' learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- All pupils benefit from opportunities to develop their confidence and resilience through workshops linked to the school's values. For example, they learn how to be a good friend and how to look after themselves so that they know how to look after and treat others. The effect of the school's work is clearly demonstrated in pupils' good behaviour in lessons and around the school and in talking to pupils. Pupils are polite, respectful and helpful. They hold doors open for others, show good manners and introduce themselves confidently to visitors. They are a credit to the school.
- Staff provide a great deal of support for parents, especially when families are experiencing challenging circumstances. This wrap-around support covers many aspects of pupils' lives, including safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and special needs. Staff providing this support work together to ensure that the impact on pupils of family and community challenges is minimised. These approaches could be better coordinated to ensure that they have a more direct impact on improving pupils' academic outcomes.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is because pupils enjoy coming to school. They say that learning is fun and enjoyable. They talk enthusiastically about their lessons and the wide range of activities on offer in school.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and if it happens, it is dealt with swiftly. They

understand the behaviour code clearly. For example, all pupils know that any incident of bullying is taken very seriously by staff and carries the most severe consequence. This helps pupils to know that they are safe in school.

- For pupils who find it hard to focus and concentrate in school, staff provide comprehensive support to help them manage their behaviour and understand their trigger points. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour to identify how they could make better choices in the future. According to the school's policy, parents will be contacted when a pupil's behaviour escalates beyond a certain point. However, staff are now starting to engage parents earlier in supporting pupils to improve their own behaviour.
- In the past, attendance has been below the national average for some pupils. This is sometimes because parents do not manage to get their children into school on time and, as a result, the children are marked as absent in the register. Leaders have recently appointed a member of staff to check on attendance and punctuality more closely and work with parents to ensure that they understand the consequences of frequent absence or lateness. As a result of more rigorous monitoring and follow-up, coupled with more challenging targets, attendance is starting to improve to be more in line with the national averages overall and for disadvantaged pupils. For pupils with SEND, attendance is slightly below that of other pupils, but not significantly.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes across the school are mixed. At key stage 2, outcomes have been variable for the last three years. In 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard for their age in the combined measure for reading, writing and mathematics improved dramatically, compared with 2016, to be above the national average. However, in 2018, this improvement was not sustained, and the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard for their age dropped significantly below the national average. This was due to very weak outcomes in mathematics in 2018, which contrasted starkly with very strong outcomes in reading particularly. Leaders explained that the introduction of a new approach to the teaching of mathematics confused some pupils and had a negative impact on outcomes in 2018. Work in pupils' books and current pupils' mathematical skills show that, for some pupils, basic mathematical knowledge such as times tables is still not sufficiently embedded for pupils to recall facts quickly and fluently. This hampers pupils' progress.
- By contrast, pupils' attainment and progress in reading in 2018 were well above the national averages by the end of key stage 2. Reading is a success story in this school. Pupils read fluently. They love reading and they read often. Many pupils talk excitedly and knowledgeably about the books they are reading. This is the case across the school, from Reception to Year 6.
- In writing, although pupils' skills lag behind their reading ability, by the end of key stage 2 in 2018, pupils' progress in writing was in line with the national average. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the standard expected for their age by the end of key stage 2 in writing was slightly below the national average.
- Improving pupils' writing, particularly for the most able, is a priority for the school. Leaders have introduced new approaches to the teaching of writing and to improving

pupils' handwriting. Teachers run a writers' club for the most able pupils aiming to achieve the higher standard in writing. Work in current pupils' books shows that a higher proportion of pupils are on track to achieve at the higher standard by the end of key stage 2 in writing this year compared with 2018. There is evidence that these initiatives are starting to have an impact on pupils' progress, but more time is needed for them to become embedded.

- At key stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been consistently below the national averages for the last three years. Children come into the Nursery and Reception classes with skills that are well below what is typical for their age. Work in pupils' books shows that current pupils are making strong progress in writing in Year 1. In Year 2, the most able pupils and the middle-ability pupils are already achieving the standard expected for their age in writing. However, the most able pupils are not yet working at greater depth.
- In the phonics screening check, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard has been below the national average for the last three years. However, from pupils' low starting points on entry to the school in terms of language development, their achievements represent good progress.
- Pupils with SEND make strong progress from their starting points because leaders review their learning regularly and monitor the support they receive to ensure that it meets the needs of each pupil. Teachers receive effective support to adapt their teaching. The impact of additional support on the progress made by pupils with SEND is evaluated effectively.
- Disadvantaged pupils make progress that is similar to, and sometimes better than, that of other pupils from similar starting points. This is because leaders check their progress regularly and ensure that pupil premium funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. For example, pupils benefit from a free breakfast club and a range of after-school clubs, which support pupils' social and emotional well-being. Staff provide comprehensive support to parents when they need it to ensure that pupils come to school regularly, on time and ready to learn. Pupils who find it hard to focus and behave well benefit from a wide range of interventions to help them improve their behaviour. Disadvantaged pupils are supported effectively to overcome barriers to learning.

Early years provision

Good

- Children in the early years are happy and behave very well. They settle into routines easily and quickly develop good habits which build their confidence and independence, for example choosing equipment and activities, tidying up and putting on aprons and wellingtons to go outside. Staff are caring and all welfare requirements are met.
- The early years leader is experienced, knowledgeable and passionate about early years education. She is determined that all children will thrive and receive high-quality support to meet their needs. She has rightly identified that poor speech and language development is a significant barrier to learning for many children when they start Nursery or school. Her expertise in speech and language development ensures that children benefit from a language-rich environment. Staff are well trained to support pupils' language development, and external experts provide additional support when

necessary. In this way, additional funding is used effectively to address children's needs.

- The early years leader is proactive and tenacious in engaging parents in children's learning, through stay-and-play sessions and workshops to help parents understand how to support their children's learning. At holiday times, parents receive resources such as reading books to support their children's learning at home.
- Adults provide effective support for children's learning. For example, they ask children to explain why things happen; they intervene in children's play only when necessary and in a timely way and ensure that activities are well matched to children's needs. As a result, children make strong progress from their starting points and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Children enjoy a well-balanced blend of child-initiated activities and more formal teaching. The approach to the teaching of phonics in the early years has recently been changed to introduce more formal phonics teaching sessions in Nursery. The impact of this on children's early reading skills is already noticeable when talking to children and in their learning journeys recorded by staff.
- During free-choice activities, children have plenty of opportunities to practise their skills, play and explore with others and develop their own ideas. In the outdoor area, for example, children were using fishing nets to 'catch' letters and put them in the correct buckets. Children were embedding their phonic knowledge while developing their manual dexterity.
- Although very few children start school with skills appropriate for their age, by the end of Reception, a much greater proportion achieve a good level of development. This represents strong progress as a result of effective provision.

School details

Unique reference number	103925
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10056188

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	457
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Steven Walters
Headteacher	Laura Bodin (acting headteacher)
Telephone number	01215 562651
Website	www.glebefields.net
Email address	headteacher@glebefields.sandwell.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	

Information about this school

- Glebefields Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is far higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is much higher than the national average. However, the proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- More pupils leave and join the school part way through the school year than is typical in other schools nationally.
- When children start the school, a very significant majority have skills well below those typical for their age.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited lessons jointly with the acting headteacher and other leaders.
- Pupils' work, from all year groups and in a range of subjects, was scrutinised.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils and talked with pupils informally at breaks and lunchtimes. Nine responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire were considered.
- Inspectors listened to a number of pupils read from across the school.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, leaders and members of the governing body, as well as the local authority school improvement adviser.
- Published information about the school and information on the school's website was analysed prior to the inspection, including policies such as safeguarding, assessment, school evaluation and external reviews. Further documentation such as minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding files and the records of employment checks were also scrutinised during the inspection.
- The lead inspector took account of two free-text comments and 32 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day and visited the school's breakfast club.
- Inspectors also considered 26 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jane Spilsbury, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Justine Lomas	Ofsted Inspector
Tracy Stone	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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