

# Wilkes Green Infant School (NC)

Antrobus Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, West Midlands B21 9NT

## Inspection dates

26–27 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	Inadequate

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- This school is moving in the right direction. The pace of improvement is gathering momentum. This is because of the actions of leaders and governors. However, some weaknesses remain.
- The quality of teaching has improved over time, although is not yet consistently good. Significant changes in staffing have hampered middle leaders' efforts to ensure that all teachers provide pupils with the best learning opportunities.
- An increasing proportion of pupils attain the age-related standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1. However, these proportions remain below national averages.
- The progress pupils make is too variable and not strong. Progress in reading and mathematics, particularly for the most able pupils, is slower because teachers' expectations are not always high enough.
- Recently, leaders have brought about improvements to the breadth and quality of the curriculum. Despite this, teachers do not provide pupils with tasks in topic work that require them to think really hard.
- Leaders do not ensure that all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the support they need to make good progress.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher, ably supported by other senior leaders, provides strong leadership. He has wasted no time in focusing on the right priorities for improvement and brought about significant positive change.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons and on the playground. They treat each other kindly. Staff invest time in pupils' personal development. The school is a happy and safe place to be.
- Leaders' actions to improve the early years are impressive. Children benefit from an inspiring learning environment and effective teaching. Consequently, they achieve well.
- Pupils develop their spoken skills effectively across many subjects. Teachers regularly provide opportunities for pupils to discuss and collaborate. Pupils are building their vocabulary well.

## Full report

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

When Wilkes Green Infant School was inspected in December 2016, it was judged to require special measures. Subsequently, the school was inspected on three occasions. At the previous monitoring inspection, leaders and managers were judged to be taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management so that:
  - teachers provide suitable work for pupils with SEND that helps them to achieve success and make good progress
  - middle (phase) leaders have a more direct impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning within their year groups
  - the school's curriculum is further enhanced and includes activities that provide an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, and raise pupils' achievement further, by:
  - ensuring that all teachers have high, yet realistic, expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly the most able pupils
  - providing further professional development and training to improve teachers' subject knowledge of the key stage 1 curriculum
  - ensuring that teachers select reading books for the most able pupils that extend their understanding
  - reviewing the teaching of reading and ensuring that strategies to teach comprehension are more successful
  - embedding the new mathematics scheme and ensuring that all teachers show consistency in its agreed delivery.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Immense staffing upheaval over a long period of time has meant that leaders' initiatives to address the school's weaknesses have sometimes not been sustained. This has led to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment that leaders have still not fully ironed out. Staffing is now stabilising.
- Since the school went into special measures, there have been several interim leaders, including three different headteachers. The new headteacher, although only in post for six months, quickly identified priorities for improvement. He has put robust plans in place and addressed the most pressing issues. Leaders' work is bringing about more rapid improvements.
- Staff benefit from a range of training and development opportunities. As a result of effective support provided by the local authority's commissioned service for school improvement, middle leaders are growing in confidence and developing their leadership skills.
- However, middle leaders have only had their areas of responsibility for a short period of time. While they have taken steps to rectify weaknesses in teaching and learning, there has been insufficient time for their work to be embedded. Therefore, their impact on improving the quality of teaching, while positive, has not yet been fully realised.
- Since 2016, there have been several changes of special educational needs coordinators (SENCo). This has led to a lack of consistency over time in the identification of, and effective provision for, pupils with SEND. Consequently, pupils' individual plans do not always identify clearly the most suitable interventions. The new SENCo has already started to address this.
- A determined headteacher, with clarity of vision, knows exactly what needs to be done to ensure that pupils experience the best possible learning and make good progress. Senior leaders' careful checks on the quality of teaching and learning, combined with effective support for teachers, have helped to eradicate inadequate teaching.
- Leaders improved the school's assessment system to ensure that teachers' assessments are now more accurate and reliable. Teachers use assessment information well to identify any pupils at risk of falling behind in their learning. They put appropriate small group teaching sessions in place that help pupils to catch up.
- The school's curriculum is currently being revised. Leaders have improved the breadth of the curriculum so pupils experience learning across a wider range of subjects. However, in some subjects, such as religious education and history, teachers set simple tasks that do not require pupils to work hard, extend their thinking, and build new knowledge. Leaders have appropriate plans to address this issue next academic year.
- Leaders use most additional funding with increasing effectiveness to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils, including children who are looked after. For example, pupils benefit from individual pastoral support to assist their personal development. Funding for pupils with SEND is less well targeted and does not support their achievement as effectively as it should.

- The 10, largely negative, views from parents and carers on Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, about pupils’ welfare and how bullying is dealt with do not reflect the findings of inspectors, the views of pupils or the verbal feedback from most parents spoken to during the inspection.
- Most parents say the school is improving, their children are happy and safe in school, and the quality of education is getting better. A few parents feel that their children are not given enough challenging work. Leaders seek feedback from parents on proposed changes and try to keep them informed in different ways, including through the school’s website, social media and text messaging.

## **Governance of the school**

- The interim executive board (IEB) has a direct, positive influence on enabling leaders to address weaknesses effectively. Through monthly meetings, the IEB challenges leaders to account for the school’s performance and is not afraid to ask difficult questions. The IEB is strongly focused on improving outcomes for pupils, both academic and personal. Members of the IEB have a detailed knowledge of how well pupils are achieving. They work with leaders to regularly evaluate school improvement strategies to check that they are making a positive difference to pupils’ outcomes.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff understand that keeping pupils safe from harm is of paramount importance. They are vigilant and report any concerns about a child, without delay, to the relevant persons in school. When the need arises, staff seek external advice and ensure that the welfare of the child is always the main priority. Staff will challenge other agencies when they consider that not enough is being done to protect a child.
- Staff know pupils well and develop good relationships with parents. School is a safe place where pupils are looked after well. Staff receive effective training and understand that safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. Governors take all necessary steps to recruit staff who are suitable to work with children. Pupils show a good understanding about risks, such as talking to strangers, and know how to keep themselves safe.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching and learning across the school is mixed and not consistently good. In a few classes, teachers’ expectations of what pupils should achieve in reading and mathematics are not high enough. As a consequence, not all pupils attain the standards of which they are capable by the end of key stage 1.
- Despite the quality of teaching not yet being good, it has improved since the last full inspection. This is because of bespoke support and training for teachers, revised curriculum planning and better assessment procedures. Leaders have recently introduced a new scheme of work for mathematics. This is helping pupils to develop greater confidence in their number work through consolidation and practice.
- However, not all teachers have a secure understanding of the key stage 1 curriculum and how young children learn effectively. Encouragingly, training is addressing gaps in

teachers' subject knowledge and enabling teachers to feel more confident. This is contributing, albeit gradually, to improvements in the quality of teaching.

- The teaching of phonics and early reading is effective. Pupils usually apply their phonic knowledge well to spell age-appropriate words correctly. Teachers' investment in promoting a love of reading has paid off. Pupils want to read for enjoyment. They read regularly, with growing confidence and talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors.
- During 'guided reading' sessions, pupils' comprehension skills are less well developed because, too often, teachers do not select the most appropriate reading material to develop their understanding. This is especially the case with the most able pupils where teacher-directed reading books lack challenge. This slows progress.
- In most classes, writing is taught effectively. Pupils express themselves well through their written work, across a range of subjects, and select adventurous vocabulary. Occasionally, teachers provide too much structure when teaching writing. This hinders, rather than supports, pupils' good learning. Pupils' handwriting is improving and shows increasing fluency.
- Teachers do not do enough to adapt learning to make it suitable for pupils with SEND. This leads to pupils with SEND often floundering and giving up because they cannot complete work they have been given to do. Consequently, this group of pupils does not achieve as well as other pupils.
- Teachers develop pupils' speaking and listening skills well. Pupils learn new words and extend their vocabulary, demonstrating a good understanding of key words linked to their topics.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Teachers plan and deliver worthwhile learning experiences for pupils that enhance their personal development. Pupils are taught about how to lead healthy lifestyles. They speak with clarity about what they can do to keep fit and healthy, such as not sitting too long in front of a screen, and instead doing exercise.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare, although when it does occur teachers deal with it immediately. Pupils know that they have a trusted adult to go to if they have any worries or concerns. Pupils know how to stay safe online.
- The school's personal, social and health education programme effectively supports pupils' understanding about a wide range of topics including cultural diversity, relationships and positive mental health. Pupils learn how to deal with their emotions and know what makes them unique. They learn about different religions and respect individual differences. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Warm, positive relationships between staff and pupils create a safe environment where pupils feel secure to try out ideas and share their thoughts. Pupils speak positively about their school. They are enthusiastic about learning. School offers several after-

school clubs that enrich pupils' learning.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. It has improved over time and continues to improve. Inspectors agree with parents' views that behaviour is typically good throughout the school.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils work hard in lessons and listen attentively to their teachers. They treat each other with kindness and consideration. Pupils work very well together on joint tasks and show respect for each other's ideas. This behaviour supports their progress.
- Leaders have created a calm, orderly environment. Pupils are polite and show good manners. They enjoy each other's company on the playground and join with their friends in games. Pupils understand the school rules and consequences for poor behaviour. Occasionally, some fidgety, restless behaviour is evident in lessons when teaching does not cater for the needs of all pupils.
- Leaders keep a close eye on pupils' behaviour and put in place support for those who need additional help to manage their behaviour. These interventions are successful. No pupils have been excluded.
- Leaders emphasise to parents the importance of pupils attending regularly. Leaders' strategies to reduce rates of absence have been effective. Pupils' attendance has improved and is now broadly in line with the national average figure.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Due to significant staff changes, historical weak teaching, and inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, pupils still have gaps in their knowledge that hinder them from achieving as well as they could. Therefore, the progress of current pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, while improving, remains too variable and is not yet strong across all classes and subjects.
- The proportions of pupils attaining the age-related standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1 are increasing, although they remain below national averages.
- Boys, typically, do not achieve as well as girls in reading. However, leaders' initiatives to promote a love of reading among boys have led to a rise in boys' interest in reading. Boys now read for pleasure more frequently and this is enabling them to make better progress in developing their reading skills.
- Pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they could because, too often, their individual targets are not matched closely enough to their specific needs. In a few instances, where teachers take a pupil's individual needs carefully into account, they achieve well and make small, consistent steps in their learning.
- Historically, the proportion of Year 1 pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check has been below the national average. However, improvements to the teaching of early reading have meant that current pupils are making much

better progress at securing their sounds. They show confidence in working out unknown words through the application of their phonic knowledge.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Senior leaders' unrelenting focus on improving the early years learning environment has paid off. Staff have taken advantage of advice from external consultants and used this wisely to make changes to the provision. Leaders have transformed classrooms and the outdoor space, creating exciting areas for children to explore, and where learning is abundant.
- The early years leaders have a clear oversight of the early years provision. They provide relevant training to staff, with the aim of ensuring that their work reflects best early years practice. Leaders have identified priorities for improvement and acted on these rapidly to ensure that children learn effectively and are cared for and safe.
- Staff work hard and plan enticing activities that capture children's attention and get them excited about learning. For example, a group of children eagerly used magnifying glasses to search in the outdoor area for minibeasts. They recorded their findings carefully and were proud to share their work with adults.
- Children in the Nursery class make strong progress from their starting points because of the rich learning opportunities and carefully planned support. Staff know the children very well and use this knowledge to build trusting relationships that support good learning.
- The quality of teaching in early years is good. It inspires children to engage independently in their learning and, as a result, they make strong progress. Children's achievement in writing is particularly notable because they express their ideas so well and are keen to write independently. Children apply their knowledge of phonics effectively to spell simple words correctly.
- By the end of Reception in 2018, almost two thirds of children reached a good level of development and were well prepared for the demands of Year 1. This was a noticeable improvement on the previous year, where less than half of children were ready. Current children are achieving well because of much better teaching and learning.
- Teachers provide an exciting array of good-quality resources that children access independently to structure their learning. Children work well together, sharing and talking about what they are doing. For example, on the 'tinkering table' a group of boys made choices about which materials to use and used a screwdriver safely to attach legs to a mini table that they were creating.
- Children show a desire to read because adults frequently encourage reading. Teachers skilfully plan appropriate activities linked to books such as 'The Enormous Turnip'. Children enjoy their learning and willingly engage in a range of adult-directed and child-initiated activities. They explore their surroundings and develop their speaking and listening skills well.
- Staff keep children safe, although at the same time allow children to make choices and take responsibility for their actions. Teachers establish good routines, and this contributes to the children's good behaviour, where they get along well together and

help each other.

- Parents value the school's efforts to engage them with their children's learning and keep them informed about how they are getting on in school. Parents' feedback from the well-attended 'stay and play' sessions is particularly favourable.



## School details

Unique reference number	103308
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10100582

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	344
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Jan Midgley
Headteacher	Mangal Singh
Telephone number	0121 5541104
Website	<a href="http://www.wilkgrni.bham.sch.uk">www.wilkgrni.bham.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquiry@wilkgrni.bham.sch.uk">enquiry@wilkgrni.bham.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	6–7 December 2016

## Information about this school

- The headteacher of Wilkes Green Junior School took over Wilkes Green Infant School as executive headteacher in September 2018. Wilkes Green Infant School is due to close and merge with the junior school to become a primary school on 1 May 2019.
- The school is governed by an IEB.
- The school receives formal support related to improving leadership, and teaching and learning. This is brokered through Colmore Teaching School Alliance.
- The proportion of pupils supported with an education, health and care plan is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who receive SEND support is also below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is broadly in line with the national average.
- The school does not have a religious ethos.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed a variety of lessons across all year groups, most of which were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors reviewed pupils' work across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors interviewed pupils and spoke to them informally during lessons and at breaktimes to gather their views about school, their safety and learning. Inspectors also observed pupils during lunchtime.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders and phase leaders. They also talked to other staff to gather their views on leadership and safeguarding.
- The lead inspector met with two members of the IEB, one of whom was the chair. He also met with a representative from a service for school improvement, commissioned by the local authority.
- Responses from 10 parents and carers to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) were analysed. Inspectors also gathered parents' views at the start of the school day and considered the school's own parent evaluations.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to pupils about their interest in reading.
- The inspection team considered a wide range of information including policies, development plans, curriculum plans, the school's website, safeguarding documentation, pupils' assessment information and leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning.

## Inspection team

Tim Hill, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Anna Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Dawn White	Ofsted Inspector

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