

Gossey Lane Academy

Gossey Lane, Kitts Green, Birmingham, West Midlands B33 0DS

Inspection dates

10–11 April 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics are low. While standards are now improving, gaps remain in pupils' knowledge and skills.
- Pupils do not make consistently strong progress across the school from their starting points. Expectations of what pupils can achieve remain low.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good across the school. Strengths in teaching in some classes and subjects are not evident in all.
- The most able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently. Few pupils reach the higher standards.
- Although the curriculum plan meets the requirements of the national curriculum, some subjects are not taught as regularly as others. As a result, pupils do not develop their skills in a broad range of subjects.
- Early years provision requires improvement. Although children engage well, a lack of purpose behind many tasks is evident.
- The quality of handwriting and presentation is poor in many classes. Pupils do not have well-developed fine motor skills.
- Levels of persistent absence are above average and this limits the progress that pupils who are absent can make.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and the trust have taken decisive action to halt the significant decline which followed the last inspection. The school is now moving in the right direction.
- Across the school teaching is improving and pupils are making better progress. Standards at the end of key stage 2 have risen.
- Phonics teaching is effective. Standards at the end of Year 1 are in line with national averages.
- Arrangements to keep pupils safe are effective. Leaders ensure that policies and procedures are understood and followed by all staff.
- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are well cared for.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are polite and well-mannered. They get along well with each other.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils' progress is consistently good, by ensuring that all teachers and staff:
 - have high expectations of what all pupils can do and achieve
 - are equipped with a secure knowledge of what good teaching is that will support them in delivering high-quality learning for all groups of pupils
 - use assessment information to build on what children already know and can do, rapidly addressing the gaps in learning
 - set work for pupils that is not too hard or too easy and meets their differing needs, adapting tasks as appropriate
 - routinely address pupils' misconceptions and the inaccurate use of basic skills such as spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting
 - address as a matter of urgency the poor level of handwriting and fine motor skills of many pupils across the school.
- Improve outcomes for all pupils, especially for the most able and those who are disadvantaged, by:
 - continuing to accelerate the progress pupils make from their different starting points
 - increasing the proportions of pupils reaching the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics
 - fully embedding the improvement strategies recently put in place.
- Further embed the curriculum so that pupils have the opportunity to develop skills in a wide range of subjects.
- Improve the provision in the early years so that learning gets off to a good start, by:
 - using assessment information to plan purposeful learning activities that stimulate and challenge children of varying needs and abilities
 - ensuring that all adults make the most of every opportunity to challenge and extend children's thinking and reasoning
 - having high expectations of what children can achieve.
- Continue to work with parents so that attendance levels rise and fewer pupils are persistently absent.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Following the last inspection, the school experienced a period of rapid decline. The quality of education provided across the school deteriorated and outcomes for pupils declined significantly. Senior leaders, governors and the trust board have halted and reversed the decline. They are working effectively together to improve the school.
- Leaders are ambitious for this school. They are determined to ensure that outcomes rise and the quality of education improves for each and every pupil. A sense of moral purpose is evident in their commitment to the whole school community in ensuring the sustainability of the school.
- Senior leaders know the school well. They use a systematic approach to identify where the strengths and weaknesses lie. They carefully monitor the quality of teaching and learning through regular visits to classrooms, scrutiny of pupils' books and analysis of assessment information. Self-evaluation is accurate and used effectively to inform the next stage of school improvement.
- Together, the headteacher and deputy headteacher are tackling underperformance and inadequate teaching. A robust cycle of performance management has been introduced. Working with senior leaders, the headteacher provides support and guidance to improve teaching. New policies and procedures are being implemented but consistently good teaching is not yet secure across the school.
- Leaders work to ensure a consistent approach to teaching and learning across the school. New approaches for teaching writing and mathematics and the high standards expected are discussed with all staff. Middle leaders responsible for reading, writing and mathematics provide effective support and challenge in their respective subject areas. They provide training for staff and are beginning to check the quality of the provision. Expectations have been raised.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective. The leader for this area is skilled and knowledgeable. Appropriate systems now ensure the early identification of pupils with SEND. Additional support is timely and as a result, pupils are making strong progress from their different starting points.
- The 'rainbow curriculum' is carefully planned to cover the full range of the national curriculum requirements. The 'Gossey life skills', such as developing independence and the ability to ask questions, underpin the curriculum. However, due to the focus on core subjects such as English and mathematics, some subjects are not taught regularly. This results in a lack of continuity and pupils' progression through the wider curriculum is hindered. The curriculum requires further development to ensure that the full range of subjects are fully embedded across the school. Pupils have a range of opportunities to develop their understanding of fundamental British values. Leaders link these to the school's 'ASPIRE' values which are threaded through everything the school does. Pupils are respectful and tolerant and demonstrate a deep understanding of right and wrong.
- Pupil premium funding is used appropriately and the impact is carefully checked by leaders and governors. Leaders use the funding for a range of support and

interventions to improve learning, as well as for trips and visits. This has led to improvements in the progress made by disadvantaged pupils.

- Specific funds for physical education (PE) and sport are used to provide support for lessons and to encourage more pupils to be active. Currently, it is not used to train school staff in the teaching of PE. Although more pupils participate in extra-curricular clubs, very few pupils can swim the required 25 metres by the end of Year 6.
- Parents have mixed views about the school since it converted to become an academy. While some parents are very supportive and say their children are making good progress, others are not as positive. Leaders acknowledge that there is work to do to build more positive links with parents and ensure communication is clear and transparent.
- The trust offers effective support and challenge to the school. As the trust has expanded, additional support has focused specifically on the primary schools. This is helping improve the quality of teaching and learning at Gossey Lane. Networks across the trust enable staff to work closely together and good practice to be shared.

Governance of the school

- The academy advisory board, appointed by the trust, hold leaders to account rigorously for the quality of education across the school. Roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability across the trust are explicit and clearly understood by all those involved in governance.
- Members of the advisory board are skilled and knowledgeable. They use their wealth of relevant experience and expertise effectively to support and challenge school leaders. Through first-hand visits and regular meetings with school leaders, they have a comprehensive strategic oversight across all aspects of provision. Members have a secure knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are clear about the work that still needs to be done to ensure that the school provides a good quality of education.
- Members support leaders in embedding the new approaches to teaching and learning. They value the opportunities that belonging to the trust brings and the chance to help leaders and staff learn from best practice within the trust. They understand how additional funding is spent to support pupils to make better progress. Members demonstrate a strong commitment to working with school leaders to improve the school further.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils are confident that the school is a safe place. They talk positively about trusted adults in school who listen to them and support them. The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet. Younger children learn how to keep their body safe and which drugs are useful as medicines, while older pupils learn about healthy and safe relationships.
- Leaders take appropriate steps to protect children at risk of harm. Staff are

appropriately trained in safeguarding, including the 'Prevent' duty and how to keep pupils safe from extremism and radicalisation. Designated safeguarding leaders also attend a range of higher-level training. All staff know what to do if they are worried about a child. Comprehensive records are kept and regularly discussed and reviewed by designated safeguarding leaders. Links with external agencies ensure that vulnerable children and their families receive timely and appropriate support.

- Leaders work closely with the safeguarding director of the trust to ensure that policies and procedures take account of the most recent government guidance. The single central register is compliant. A clear system is in place for checking the suitability of staff to work with children. Induction procedures ensure that all new staff understand the school process for dealing with any concern about a child. Leaders, including governors, ensure that policies and procedures are followed appropriately and consistently. Governors are knowledgeable about safeguarding and understand their responsibilities for keeping children safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent across the school. It is not yet consistently good enough to ensure that pupils make good progress and achieve the standards they are capable of reaching. Turbulence in staffing and low expectations from some staff have resulted in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment requiring improvement. Leaders in the school and across the trust work together to limit the impact of staffing changes.
- Over time, the expectations of what pupils could achieve have been too low. Particular weaknesses in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics led to low achievement for many pupils by the end of key stages 1 and 2. As a consequence, there are now gaps in some pupils' knowledge and understanding. The headteacher and her senior team have raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve but acknowledge that this is still not yet consistent across the school.
- The standard of teaching is still variable across the school. There is evidence of strong teaching but also some that is weaker. Senior leaders have an accurate view of teaching and are clear about where improvements are needed. Coaching and support are provided to help teachers improve their teaching with the aim of it being good in every class. Specific approaches to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics have been introduced but are not yet embedded in practice or consistent across the school.
- Where teaching is most effective, learning is thoughtfully planned and activities enable pupils of different abilities to make good progress. However, too often the learning sequences planned do not build systematically on what pupils can already do. The pitch of work is not well-matched to pupils' different needs. Sometimes work is too easy and lacks appropriate challenge to enable pupils to make good progress. At other times staff stick to the agreed approach and are not adapting tasks quickly enough in order to meet pupils' needs effectively. This hinders the progress pupils make.
- The teaching of mathematics varies in quality from class to class. Pupils' ability and fluency in using basic skills such as addition, subtraction and multiplication are improving quickly as a result of pupils' regular practice. Some teachers model and

explain clearly what the tasks are about so pupils make good progress. However, not all teachers use the agreed approach effectively to move pupils on when they are ready for a new challenge or problem to solve. Learning time is lost as pupils who have finished an easier task wait to be told what to do next.

- A new approach to the teaching of writing is being embedded across the school this year. Training for staff and ongoing support from leaders promote a consistent approach and a clear structure. Pupils engage enthusiastically with the key texts chosen. A focus on teaching vocabulary is having a positive impact and pupils use a wide range of words appropriately in their independent writing. However, opportunities to write in subjects other than English remain limited.
- Expectations for the standards of writing across the school are not yet high enough. Simple mistakes in spelling and punctuation are not routinely picked up. Work in pupils' books shows that standards of presentation are inconsistent. Expectations are not made clear and adults do not provide good examples for pupils to follow. Pupils are not helped to develop their handwriting regularly enough. As a result, a large majority of pupils have poorly developed writing skills. This limits their ability to write quickly, neatly and fluently.
- The teaching of reading is effective. The core curriculum for literacy ensures that pupils are exposed to a range of challenging books and different genres over time. More opportunities for reading are built into the timetable, including time to listen to a story being read by an adult. New resources, including the new library, provide a wealth of reading material to choose from. By the end of key stage 2 pupils read fluently and confidently. They use expression to bring their reading alive. Pupils can say which books they like and why. Pupils say they enjoy reading.
- Positive relationships are evident in classrooms. Pupils talk and listen to each other carefully. They are happy to work together and support each other effectively.
- Additional adults are used effectively across the school. They provide appropriate support, particularly to pupils with SEND. They encourage pupils to do their best.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to support pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards their education and they enjoy coming to school. They talk enthusiastically about their learning. They are keen to share their work and are proud of their achievements.
- Pupils demonstrate a positive attitude towards each other. They are tolerant and accepting of the differences between people. They look to help and provide support to those who struggle. For example, some pupils were concerned about the number of steps in the school which could cause difficulty for anyone using a wheelchair or who had walking difficulties.
- Pupils learn to keep themselves safe. For example, when using the internet they know not to give out personal information. They are aware of the dangers when crossing the

road and know who to talk to if they have any worries.

- Pupils have a well-developed understanding of bullying. They know that it is something that happens 'several times on purpose'. They have a good understanding about what constitutes bullying, including racist, homophobic and prejudicial bullying. Pupils state that it is not tolerated in their school and know that adults will help them deal with it if it did happen.
- Pupils have opportunities to take on a range of responsibilities in the school. They take these seriously and carry them out sensibly. Pupils say that they like being asked to help others.
- Leaders and staff develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding through the wider curriculum. They celebrate all achievements both in and out of school. Although pupils have a well-developed understanding of Christianity, they were less confident when talking about other religions.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They are keen to talk about what they are doing and share their work enthusiastically. However, many pupils rely on adults to tell them what to do next and do not push themselves as well as they might. Not all pupils take pride in their work. As a result, work in pupils' books does not currently reflect what they are capable of.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is a calm and orderly place to be. Pupils behave well in and around the school. Pupils have good manners, and they are polite and helpful to adults. They are courteous and greet visitors with a smile. Pupils hold doors open and stand to one side to let adults pass.
- Pupils follow instructions well and respond quickly. For example, they line up appropriately and walk sensibly into assembly. They listen carefully and are calm and respectful throughout.
- Pupils want to learn. When teaching is engaging and meets their needs, they work well. Pupils are content to sit and wait when the quality of teaching is not good enough and adults do not expect enough from them.
- Across the school, staff consistently encourage and reward good behaviour. Pupils know what is expected. Year 2 pupils confidently explained the 'Gossey way' to inspectors, telling them to be ready, respectful and safe. Pupils enjoy receiving a token to put in the collection heart. They know that this contributes towards receiving a whole-school reward such as an ice cream. There is a strong sense of belonging.
- A recent spike in the number of fixed-term exclusions is a result of higher expectations of behaviour from all staff across the school. The numbers have now levelled out as pupils understand and respond positively to the clear expectations in place.
- Attendance is improving and is now much closer to the national average. Leaders monitor attendance and quickly follow up any absences. They use every available means to address poor attendance, including first-day telephone calls, home visits and the issuing of fixed-term penalty notices. Many parents underestimate the impact that

time away from school has on their children's attainment and progress.

- The numbers of pupils who are persistently absent remains above national averages. However, for several of these children and families there are mitigating circumstances.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Following the last inspection levels of attainment fell dramatically from being above national averages to significantly below. Since academisation, leaders have driven improvements across the school and outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 2 have risen. For example, in 2016 only 16% of pupils reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6. In 2018 this had increased to 43%.
- Although attainment at the end of key stage 2 shows a three-year upward trend, it is still below the national average. Leaders work closely with the Year 6 teacher to promote high expectations and provide additional support for pupils, many of whom have gaps in their learning from previous weaknesses in teaching. School-held data and work in the books of current pupils indicate that improvements are being made and more pupils are reaching the expected standards.
- Not enough pupils achieve higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2. Leaders are working with staff to develop higher expectations and greater challenge. While these aspects are improving, leaders acknowledge that there is more to be done to secure higher standards, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Outcomes at the end of key stage 1 have been below national averages for the last three years. There are indications that this is beginning to change. More pupils are now reaching the expected standards. Some pupils are also achieving the higher standards in reading. The gap with national averages is closing.
- As a result of the focused approach to the teaching of reading over the last three years, more pupils are reaching age-related expectations by the end of Year 6 than have done in the recent past.
- Over the last three years, progress in mathematics across key stage 2 has been well below average. However, the workbooks of current pupils show that they are making much stronger progress. This is a result of a new approach to the teaching of mathematics and many more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their skills and knowledge.
- The proportion of pupils who meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check rose in 2018 and was above national standards for the first time.
- Disadvantaged pupils make better progress than their peers in many year groups. At the end of key stage 2 in 2018, disadvantaged pupils' progress in reading and mathematics was stronger than their peers, although still below that of others nationally.
- The progress of pupils with SEND is good. Despite their barriers to learning, many of them make steady progress as a result of the support they receive. Pupils with specific identified learning difficulties make good progress. They respond well to the support they receive in one-to-one or small group situations.

- Pupils' variable learning in a range of other subjects reflects the inconsistencies in teaching and learning over time and between subjects.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Recent changes to the organisation of the early years are helping to engage all children in their learning. All areas of learning are provided for and independence is encouraged. However, the lack of purpose behind many of the activities limits the progress children can make. Consequently, the early years requires improvement.
- The majority of children enter the early years with skills that are below those typical for their age. Some children are significantly behind on entry. Although children make steady progress from their low starting points, the proportion of children who reach a good level of development has been below national averages for more than three years.
- Leaders ensure that staff receive support from other schools in the trust. Additional support from a local teaching school has also been commissioned to develop the leadership of the early years further. However, this is very recent and is yet to have an impact on the quality of teaching and leadership in the early years.
- Analysis of assessment information and the tracking of children's progress is effective. Leaders work across the trust to moderate entry data and ensure that it is correct. A secure baseline is now in place. However, adults do not use this information carefully enough on a day-to-day basis to plan activities which challenge children effectively or build on what children already know and can do. Expectations of what children can achieve are too low. This slows the progress children make.
- Adults interact with children and know when to intervene. They ask questions to check what the child is doing or to help them complete an activity successfully. However, not all adult interactions are effective in challenging children's thinking. Opportunities to extend children's learning are missed. As a result, children do not make connections and build on what they already know as quickly as they might.
- A focus on developing spoken language is evident in the early years. Adults encourage talk and support children effectively in conversation during a range of tasks. Adults model and communicate clearly. They introduce children to a wide-ranging vocabulary. Children confidently ask questions and converse with one another. They talk about what they are doing with staff and visitors.
- Phonics teaching is systematic, building up children's skills and knowledge effectively over time. Children use their phonic knowledge to read and write simple sentences. Children enjoy writing. During the inspection, they wrote simple sentences about the Easter story. They are beginning to use a cursive script in line with school policy, although more needs to be done to help pupils develop their fine motor skills and acquire greater pencil control.
- Children behave and play well together, Routines are well established and children know what is expected. They understand taking turns, sharing and listening to adults. Children respond well to each other and to the caring adults around them because relationships are strong. As a result, children develop the ability to express themselves confidently.

- Parents say their children are happy in school. They appreciate the opportunity to attend workshops to learn how to support their children with phonics and reading. They are positive about their children's experience in the early years.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective. Children learn to take risks in a safe environment. For example, while digging in the vegetable patch, children warned the inspector about the nettles growing nearby. They confidently explain how to use the trowels carefully. All appropriate welfare standards are met. Adults are vigilant and ensure that children are well cared for.

School details

Unique reference number	142794
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10088521

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Pete Anstey
Headteacher	Sarah Amin
Telephone number	0121 4642909
Website	www.gosseylane.org.uk
Email address	enquiry@gosseylane.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Gossey Lane Academy is an average-sized primary school. There is one class in each year from Reception to Year 6. The school's Nursery closed in 2018 as a result of falling numbers and financial constraints.
- The school is an academy convertor. It joined the Washwood Heath Multi-Academy Trust in May 2016. The local academy advisory board works with the headteacher and senior leaders to provide the strategic direction for the school. The academy advisory board reports to the board of trustees for the multi-academy trust. The trust provides a range of support to aid school improvement.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, with other pupils coming from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is lower than that found in most primary schools. Fewer pupils have an education, health care plan than is found nationally.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average. The school sits in the top 20% of schools nationally for deprivation.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The headteacher returned from maternity leave in December 2018. The assistant headteacher resigned from post in February 2019.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, SEND coordinator and subject leaders. The lead inspector spoke with three members of the local academy advisory board, including the chair of the governing body, and met with the chief executive officer (CEO) and deputy CEO. A telephone conversation was held with a trustee.
- Inspectors made visits to classrooms on both days of the inspection. Many of these visits were with school leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide selection of pupils' books from across the curriculum. Most of the work scrutiny was completed with school leaders.
- Pupils were spoken to formally and informally. A group of pupils met with an inspector. Inspectors heard pupils read. They observed behaviour in classrooms, in corridors, and outside on the playground.
- Inspectors also spoke to parents at the start of the school day. The lead inspector considered the 10 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including four free-text responses.
- The lead inspector considered the eight responses to the staff questionnaire and the 30 responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- Various school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plans and records of monitoring. Minutes of governors' meetings and information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safety were also analysed and discussed with leaders.
- Documents relating to safeguarding were checked and inspectors looked at published information on the school's website.

Inspection team

Nicola Harwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Anna Smith

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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