

Yew Tree Primary School

Birchfield Way, Yew Tree Estate, Walsall, West Midlands WS5 4DX

Inspection dates

23–24 January 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders do not consistently take effective action to secure pupils' welfare and ensure that they are safe. Therefore, the overall effectiveness of the school, including the early years, is inadequate.
- Governors do not make thorough checks to ensure that leaders routinely implement safeguarding policies and procedures. As a result, pupils are at risk of potential harm.
- Leaders' improvement plans lack precision. They do not focus on the most important things that need to improve.
- Pupils' progress in reading at the end of key stage 2 has been below national averages for the past three years. Leaders have been too slow to address this.
- The quality of teaching has declined since the last inspection. Leaders have not guided teachers successfully to improve their practice.
- Teachers do not match work consistently well to pupils' abilities, including the most able pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Consequently, pupils do not make the progress they should.
- The curriculum is not sufficiently well planned to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. Some staff do not have the subject knowledge to support pupils' learning.
- Not all teachers ensure that pupils apply basic spelling, grammar and punctuation accurately in their writing. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write at length.
- Leaders do not use the pupil premium funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make the progress of which they are capable.
- Although improving, the number of boys and disadvantaged pupils who are frequently absent from school is too high.

The school has the following strengths

- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Despite the shortcomings in safeguarding, pupils feel safe at school. Pupils learn how to stay safe in the local community.
- Teaching in the early years is good. As a result, children enjoy learning and make strong progress from their different starting points.
- Pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1.
- Teaching in key stage 2 supports pupils to make the progress they should in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve safeguarding procedures with immediate effect by ensuring that:
 - where concerns arise about pupils' safety and welfare, leaders share these fully and swiftly with the relevant external agencies
 - regular checks are made to ensure that the appropriate actions have been taken to keep pupils safe
 - records are maintained in a way that enables leaders to have an effective oversight of concerns about pupils
 - governors thoroughly check the implementation of policies and procedures and monitor leaders' actions in response to safeguarding concerns.

- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that:
 - leaders' action plans focus sharply on the most important things that need to improve
 - leaders develop their skills in evaluating the impact of their actions on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes
 - leaders have an accurate understanding of how well teaching supports pupils' learning and progress
 - teachers receive precise feedback to support them to improve their practice
 - the curriculum is sufficiently well planned and implemented so that pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects
 - the pupil premium funding is used more effectively to enable disadvantaged pupils to achieve as well as other pupils nationally
 - plans for the use of the pupil premium funding contain more specific success criteria to enable governors to hold leaders to account for its impact
 - the number of boys and disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent is reduced further.

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - work in lessons matches pupils' abilities closely, particularly the most able pupils and pupils with SEND
 - pupils are helped to apply basic spelling, grammar and punctuation accurately in their writing
 - pupils have more opportunities to write at length in English and other curriculum

areas

- teachers and learning support practitioners have the subject knowledge and skills to support pupils to make strong progress across the curriculum
- recent improvements to the teaching of reading are embedded, so that pupils in key stage 2 make the progress of which they are capable.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

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

Inadequate

- Safeguarding is not effective. Leaders do not respond well enough to concerns raised by pupils about their safety. They do not consistently make referrals to external agencies to secure pupils' welfare. This places pupils at risk of harm.
- Leaders' actions to sustain the good quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes seen at the last inspection have not been successful. As a result, both aspects have declined. Leaders have not ensured that pupils receive consistently good teaching in their classes and subjects.
- Leaders have been too slow to address pupils' poor progress in reading in key stage 2. Recent actions have begun to improve the quality of teaching in this subject. However, it is too soon to determine the effect of this on pupils' outcomes.
- Action plans do not focus sharply enough on the aspects of the school's work that need to improve the most. Instead of targeting specific weaknesses in teaching and pupils' outcomes, leaders try to improve too much at once. This dilutes the impact of their actions.
- Leaders make frequent checks on teaching. However, they do not evaluate the extent to which teaching supports pupils to make good progress. Leaders do not provide teachers with precise feedback to help them to improve their practice. Too often, feedback focuses on aspects of teaching that will make very little difference to pupils' learning.
- Leaders are committed to raising the aspirations of pupils and their families. To this end, they have given careful thought to the design of the curriculum. They have selected topics that reflect pupils' interests and are relevant to the community in which they live. However, leaders do not make sufficiently thorough checks to ensure that teachers implement the planned curriculum suitably.
- The headteacher has revised the staffing structure to give senior and middle leaders a stronger role in raising standards. The English and mathematics leaders are keen to make a difference. They are developing an understanding of the priorities in their subjects, although they are less adept at evaluating the impact of improvement strategies.
- Leaders do not use the pupil premium funding precisely enough to enable disadvantaged pupils with a low starting point to catch up. They use too much of the funding to support whole-school developments, rather than directing it at the pupils for whom it is intended. Leaders do not measure initiatives funded through the pupil premium against clear success criteria. As a result, they do not know whether all aspects of the spending are effective.
- Interventions for pupils with SEND match their needs closely. However, leaders do not check carefully that teaching in lessons meets these pupils' needs similarly well. Consequently, over time, pupils with SEND do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders make effective use of the primary physical education (PE) and sports premium funding to improve the skills of teachers in delivering PE lessons. However, leaders' use

of the funding to increase pupils' participation in sports activities has been less successful. Pupils' attendance at after-school sports clubs is low.

- The curriculum provides a range of opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils of all ages attend the forest school, where they participate in activities to develop their social, emotional and physical skills. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures, which supports them to respect other people's beliefs.
- Most parents are happy with the school. Those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, say that the school is well led and managed and that their children make good progress.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has failed in its statutory duties to safeguard pupils. Governors have not made the necessary checks to ensure that leaders are implementing agreed safeguarding policies and keeping pupils safe.
- Governors have a secure understanding of the broad strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, until recently, they have not challenged leaders strongly enough about pupils' poor progress in reading in key stage 2.
- Although governors know about the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, they do not check to ensure that provision for disadvantaged pupils is effective and whether leaders' use of the pupil premium funding provides value for money.
- Governors collect first-hand evidence about the school's work through bi-annual 'governor days'. They work closely with individual leaders to review progress towards improvement priorities. However, governors' checks focus on the completion of actions. Governors do not evaluate the difference that leaders' actions are making to the quality of teaching and pupils' learning.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Senior leaders do not consistently share concerns about pupils' safety with the relevant professionals. Inspectors found examples where pupils had raised serious concerns about their safety at home. Leaders had not referred these concerns to the appropriate external agencies.
- Leaders responsible for safeguarding do not have a secure overview of concerns about pupils' safety and welfare. Although they document safeguarding incidents, they do not collate records of concerns, which makes it difficult to track patterns for individual pupils over time. Checks on safeguarding processes are not sufficiently thorough.
- Communication between members of the safeguarding team is weak. Leaders do not discuss concerns in enough detail and check to ensure that the appropriate actions have been taken to keep pupils safe.
- Staff have received training in safeguarding and child protection, although records of this training are incomplete. Staff know what to do should they have a concern about a pupil. However, leaders do not insist that staff always follow the procedures for

reporting a concern set out in the school's safeguarding policy.

- Leaders carry out the appropriate checks when adults apply to work at the school to ensure that they are suitable to work with children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement because it is not consistently good across year groups or subjects.
- Teachers' planning does not take enough account of what pupils know and can do. Work is not sufficiently challenging for the most able pupils. Tasks do not meet closely enough the needs of low-attaining pupils and pupils with SEND. As a result, too many of these pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Learning support practitioners help pupils to stay focused on their work. In some classes, they support pupils' learning well, particularly when working with individual pupils. However, not all learning support practitioners have the subject knowledge and skills or are sufficiently well supported by classroom teachers to make a strong contribution to pupils' learning.
- The teaching of reading and phonics in key stage 1 is effective, particularly for middle- and high-attaining pupils. Teachers use assessment information to plan lessons that match these pupils' abilities closely. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They model sounds accurately and plan activities that build on pupils' prior learning. Consequently, most pupils make good progress. However, occasionally, work is too hard for low-attaining pupils.
- Recent improvements to the teaching of reading in key stage 2 mean that pupils read with increasing fluency and accuracy. They are learning to use the skills of inference and deduction. However, teaching is still not consistently good enough to ensure that pupils make the progress needed to catch up from previous underachievement.
- In some classes, the teaching of mathematics is sharply focused and matches pupils' abilities closely. Pupils apply their knowledge to reason and solve problems, and teachers ask effective questions to develop their understanding. As a result, pupils are highly engaged in their learning and make good progress. However, in other classes work is too hard for low-attaining pupils and does not stretch the thinking of the most able pupils.
- In writing, there are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length. Too many tasks focus on developing pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar skills in isolation. Although pupils complete these tasks well, teachers do not insist that pupils apply the skills they have learned in their independent writing. Teachers do not routinely correct mistakes in pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar, which means that pupils repeat errors.
- Pupils' books show that they cover interesting and relevant topics in the wider curriculum, for example 'What was Birmingham like in the past?' However, teachers' expectations of pupils are too low. Some teachers lack the subject knowledge to plan lessons that deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding in subjects such as history, geography and science.
- Teachers plan activities and explain new concepts in a way that captures and sustains

pupils' attention. As a result, pupils are keen to learn and work hard.

- Teachers and learning support practitioners have strong relationships with pupils. This creates a meaningful learning environment where pupils feel confident to answer questions and share their ideas. Classrooms are calm and orderly, which enables pupils to concentrate on their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. This is because leaders do not consistently refer concerns about pupils' welfare to external agencies and therefore do not ensure that pupils are kept safe. Nevertheless, much of the school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is effective.
- Despite leaders not promoting the effective safeguarding of pupils, caring relationships support pupils to feel safe at school. Pupils spoken to during the inspection were confident that there is an adult they can go to if they are worried or upset. They also know that they can contact external organisations such as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.
- Leaders provide effective support for vulnerable pupils and their families. This has helped to improve the attendance and behaviour of some pupils.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. In lessons, they listen carefully to teachers' explanations and are keen to do well. Pupils cooperate well when working with a partner and in small groups. They take pride in their work and present it neatly.
- Strong curriculum provision ensures that pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They know not to share personal information online and to tell an adult if anything makes them feel uncomfortable. The curriculum is tailored to teach pupils about the risks they might face in the local community. Visitors and special events teach pupils to make informed choices about how to avoid dangers such as playing in derelict buildings. Pupils have also taken part in workshops with the police to educate them about the risks of gangs and knife crime.
- Pupils are kind and considerate towards one another. As one pupil said, 'We would notice someone who is down and get their spirits up.'
- The 'worries and wishes' group provides an opportunity for pupils to have a say in decisions that affect them. Pupils can raise issues through their class representative and are confident that this group will work successfully to resolve them.
- Pupils understand what bullying is. They say that bullying does happen. However, most pupils agree that adults deal with any incidents effectively. Leaders' records confirm this.
- Almost all parents who responded to Parent View say that their children are safe and well looked after at school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils understand staff's clear expectations about their behaviour and respond well to these. They say that adults deal with any inappropriate behaviour swiftly. Around the school, and at breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils' behaviour is calm and considerate. Most pupils show respect for each other and for adults.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and courteous. They are welcoming to visitors and are proud to talk about their learning and their school.
- Records show that leaders monitor any incidents of poor behaviour carefully. Leaders use the information they collect to provide tailored support for pupils to help them to improve their behaviour. Consequently, the number of behaviour incidents is reducing. The rate of fixed-term exclusions has fallen considerably and there have been none this academic year.
- Pupils enjoy lessons and are keen to share their answers and ideas. Most pupils are attentive and focused. However, occasionally, when work is too easy or too difficult, some pupils can lose concentration.
- Well-established classroom routines support pupils to be independent in their learning. For example, if pupils encounter a problem, they know what to do before they ask an adult for help.
- Attendance has been below national averages for the past three years, particularly for boys and disadvantaged pupils. The proportion of pupils who are frequently absent from school has been above national averages for the past two years. Leaders have started to take effective action to address this. As a result, pupils' absence and persistent absence are reducing and are currently broadly in line with national averages. However, although the attendance of boys and disadvantaged pupils is rising, more needs to be done to ensure that these pupils attend school regularly.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View agree that behaviour is good at the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress. In particular, the most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- In 2018, pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 was in line with national averages. In writing, pupils' attainment was slightly below the national average. The proportion of pupils working at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 has been in line with national averages for the past two years. Work in books shows that current pupils are making steady progress.
- Pupils' progress in reading at the end of key stage 2 has been in the lowest 20% of schools nationally for two out of the past three years. In 2018, pupils' attainment at both the expected and the higher standard fell to below national averages. Although there have been some recent improvements to the teaching of reading, current pupils

in key stage 2 are still not making strong enough progress, particularly middle- and high-attaining pupils.

- Pupils' attainment and progress in writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 has been in line with national averages for the past two years. However, inspectors found that the progress and attainment of current pupils varies across classes and subjects. School assessment information shows that in key stage 2, too few pupils are working at the standards expected for their age in writing. The quality of work in pupils' books supports this.
- Teachers do not plan work that sufficiently deepens pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in subjects such as history, geography and science. As a result, pupils make limited progress in these subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils are not achieving well enough. Published information shows that, by the end of key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils' progress in writing and mathematics is consistently below other pupils nationally. In reading, their progress has been significantly below other pupils nationally for the past two years. Current disadvantaged pupils continue to make steady, rather than good, progress. Too few of these pupils are working at the standards expected for their age, particularly in key stage 1.
- Well-planned interventions support pupils with SEND to make good progress in specific aspects of their learning. This is particularly so for pupils with high-level needs. However, pupils with SEND do not sustain this good progress outside of these interventions. This is because teachers do not tailor work in lessons to meet closely these pupils' needs.
- The most able pupils are not consistently making the progress of which they are capable. This is because teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of what these pupils can achieve. Work is often not challenging enough and does not require pupils to think deeply.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been in line with national averages for the past three years. Current pupils continue to achieve well.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- The issues that affect the safeguarding of pupils in key stages 1 and 2 also affect children in the early years. As a result, safeguarding is ineffective, which means that the early years provision is inadequate.
- Children enter the early years with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has risen steadily over the past three years. In 2018, it was in line with the national average. This represents good progress from children's low starting points.
- The early years leader is well informed. She makes regular checks on teaching and knows what is working effectively and what needs to be better. Action plans identify clear and appropriate areas for improvement. The staff work well together as a team and the quality of teaching is good.

- Leaders are reflective and make changes to provision in response to children's needs. For example, to support an increasing number of children joining the early years with poor speech and language skills, leaders have appointed a specialist member of staff. Consequently, children are now making better progress in language and communication.
- Adults make careful checks on children's learning and progress. They use the information they collect to plan next steps in children's learning. As a result, activities meet children's needs closely and support them to make good progress.
- Children develop good personal and social skills. They work well together and independently. Children take turns and share equipment, for example when painting and playing in the water tray.
- Adults plan interesting activities that engage children. For example, in the extensive outdoor area, children have opportunities to work collaboratively to make dens. Role-play areas such as the 'Winter library' and the 'Vet's clinic' encourage children to develop their language skills effectively. Consequently, children enjoy learning and stay focused for sustained periods of time.
- There are high expectations of behaviour and children respond well to these. They listen carefully to adults' instructions and follow the clear routines that adults have established. This creates a calm and purposeful atmosphere for learning.
- Adults support children's learning well by asking questions that develop their understanding. However, sometimes adults do not intervene swiftly enough to move children's learning forward.
- Relationships between adults and children are strong. As a result, children are happy and settled at school. They are keen to talk to each other and to adults about what they are learning.
- Leaders encourage parents to be involved in their children's learning, for example by contributing to their online learning journals.

School details

Unique reference number	103974
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10058602

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	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	622
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Craig Dorham
Headteacher	Rachel Hawkins
Telephone number	01922 626 926
Website	www.yewtreeprimary.co.uk
Email address	rachel.hawkins@yewtree.sandwell.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 December 2014

Information about this school

- Yew Tree Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average. The number of pupils with education, health and care plans is above the national average.
- There are three classes in each year group in the Reception Year, Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 and Year 6. There are two classes in Year 4 and Year 5. There is also a mixed class of Year 4 and Year 5 pupils. There is a morning and an afternoon Nursery class.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in parts of 32 lessons. Four of these observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders.
- An inspector listened to two groups of pupils read and talked to them about their reading.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors spoke formally with three groups of pupils as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around the school. They also took into account the 20 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- Inspectors examined the quality of work in pupils' English, mathematics and topic books. Inspectors also reviewed the work in children's early years learning journals.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and other school leaders. Inspectors met with two groups of school staff to gather their views on safeguarding, professional development and pupils' learning. Inspectors also took account of the views expressed in the 35 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- The lead inspector met with five members of the governing body. She spoke separately with the chair of governors. A meeting was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including: the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans; information about current pupils' attainment and progress; records of checks made on the quality of teaching; records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance; minutes of meetings of the governing body; and information on the school's website.
- Inspectors took into consideration the 28 responses to Parent View and the 24 free-text responses received during the inspection. One inspector spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day.

Inspection team

Claire Jones, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Gareth Morgan	Ofsted Inspector
Linda McGill	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Cladingbowl	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Cameron	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lindsay Nash	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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