

Inspection of Ferndale Primary School

Ferndale Avenue, Great Barr, Birmingham, West Midlands B43 5QF

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils achieve very well at Ferndale Primary School. Leaders have high expectations for what all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can achieve. The curriculum is ambitious, and pupils study all the subjects in the national curriculum.

Through the 'Ferndale 50', the school undertakes to give all pupils a rich set of learning experiences. These include trips to places of interest such as castles or museums, and residential visits. A wide range of after-school clubs has restarted following the COVID-19 pandemic. Parents and carers appreciate the school's inclusive values.

Pupils become thoughtful, articulate learners. Staff teach them to have a keen interest in different cultures. Pupils develop a deep respect for others. They have good opportunities to take responsibility, for example as school councillors or 'digi-leaders', helping with equipment at school events. Pupils are extremely well prepared for secondary school.

Pupils are eager to learn, and behave very well in lessons and at social times. They read widely and present their work neatly. Classrooms and corridors are calm and orderly. Pupils know there is always an adult to speak to. Bullying is very rare, and staff resolve any disagreements promptly and effectively. Pupils feel safe and happy.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have planned an ambitious curriculum. From the outset in the early years, the curriculum has been well tailored to meet the needs of the pupils. Teaching is well organised, so that pupils' work builds on what they can already do. There is a focus on the key vocabulary that pupils must learn. Teachers help pupils to remember the key knowledge in the long term. Leaders have planned activities in the early years that prepare children well for key stage 1. In some subjects, such as mathematics and art, pupils achieve particularly well. Pupils know the importance of reading. They read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books.

Teachers are knowledgeable. The teaching follows the curriculum that leaders have planned. In general, teachers adapt the work well to meet the needs of different pupils, including those with SEND. They use high-quality resources, such as the software for graphic design in computing, to deliver the curriculum. Teachers check on what pupils are learning so that they can adjust the learning accordingly. Nevertheless, some minor inconsistencies remain in the skill with which teachers implement the curriculum. Some leaders have not fully identified and addressed these inconsistencies.

From the start of the Reception year, children follow a structured phonics reading programme. They learn about letters and sounds in a logical order. Staff use

resources in a consistent way. However, there remains some inconsistency in the teaching of phonics. Staff make sure that pupils read frequently to an adult. Staff help pupils who find reading more difficult to keep up. Books for younger pupils are well matched to their knowledge of letters and sounds.

Pupils follow a comprehensive programme to develop their social and cultural understanding. Teachers supplement this with work in other areas. For example, pupils read texts about life in other countries and time periods. Pupils learn about the importance of democracy and fairness. They understand and debate differing viewpoints. Pupils are very knowledgeable and tolerant of people different from themselves. A wide range of after-school clubs adds to the richness of the curriculum. A high proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, attend. Pupils and their families benefit from high-quality pastoral care. The school holds the gold Equalities Award.

Pupils understand the school's rewards and sanctions and think that they are fair. They try hard in lessons, and support each other with their work. Any disruption to learning is very rare. The conduct of those pupils with additional behavioural needs improves over time. The playground is well equipped. This helps pupils to play happily together.

Pupils with SEND, including those in the specially resourced provision, and pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) learn well. This is because, in general, staff understand their needs and how to meet them. Nevertheless, for some of these pupils, leaders do not identify and communicate the next steps for their learning carefully enough.

The headteacher has established a strong sense of common purpose in the school. Teachers believe that leaders are always ready to help and are considerate of their workload. Leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that still need some development. Subject leaders have adapted curriculum plans well to fit the school's context.

Governors are ambitious to improve the school further. They provide effective oversight of its work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff are well trained in safeguarding. They provide helpful updates to ensure that staff are clear about their roles. Procedures for reporting concerns are understood by all. Leaders take the right actions to help children. They take appropriate steps to involve other agencies that work with children. Teachers make sure that pupils learn about the risks that they may face, including when using the internet.

The school keeps the necessary records of safeguarding checks. Leaders make the required checks on the staff who join the school. Governors provide effective oversight of safeguarding arrangements.

Pupils have confidence in talking to adults if they are worried. They feel safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some inconsistencies remain in how teachers implement the curriculum, including phonics, and assess pupils' learning. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders have the skills and opportunities to check on the implementation of their subject curriculum. This will enable leaders to make any necessary refinements to the curriculum and to provide staff with additional guidance.
- Leaders are not consistently setting clear targets for some pupils with SEND or pupils who have EAL. As a result, staff do not know as precisely as they should how to adapt work to best meet these pupils' needs. Leaders should ensure that reliable procedures are in place to assess these pupils' progress, identify their next steps and communicate this information to those who teach them.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	103982
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10241246
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	628
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Steve Sparkes
Headteacher	Ruth Gillett
Website	www.ferndaleprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 November 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has specially resourced provision for 10 pupils with autism spectrum disorder or complex communication needs.
- A breakfast club and an after-school club are run on the school site by another provider.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.

- The chair, two vice-chairs and three other governors met with the lead inspector. The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors spoke with pupils at social times, and with groups of pupils more formally.
- When inspecting safeguarding, the lead inspector looked at the school's procedures for recruiting and checking on staff suitability to work with children. He also considered the effectiveness of staff training and the procedures to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' plans to improve the school and records of governing body meetings. They also reviewed the school's attendance and behaviour records.
- The inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's questionnaire for parents. Inspectors met with parents outside the school at the start of the second day of the inspection. The inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's surveys for parents and staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, computing, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, an inspector discussed the curriculum with the subject leader, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- An inspector listened to a sample of pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 reading to a familiar adult.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
John Rowe	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Ogden	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Potter	Ofsted Inspector

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