

# Fallings Park Primary

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 104294

**Local Authority** Wolverhampton

**Inspection number** 336279

Inspection dates4-5 November 2009Reporting inspectorDavid Rzeznik HMI

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

Type of school Primary
School category Community
Age range of pupils 3–11
Gender of pupils Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll 385

**Appropriate authority** The governing body

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### **Introduction**

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 12 lessons, and held meetings with the headteacher, deputy and assistant headteachers, the chair of governors and the mathematics leader. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies and documentation, pupils' work, attainment and progress data, strategic planning, governing body minutes and local authority evaluations of the school. They analysed the responses from 37 parental, 99 pupil and 24 staff questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the success of the school in raising pupils' attainment and achievement in English, mathematics and science
- the impact of teaching and the use of assessment procedures on pupils' achievement, particularly in mathematics to ensure lessons are sufficiently challenging
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in bringing about improvement, particularly in mathematics and the Early Years Foundation Stage.

### Information about the school

Fallings Park Primary School is larger than average. Most pupils are White British. A small number are from Black, mixed heritage or Asian backgrounds. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is high. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school runs two Nursery and two Reception classes. Nursery provision is part time. Since the last inspection the youngest children have moved into new accommodation that is of good quality. A breakfast club is provided before school. It is managed by the governing body. The school has gained a Sports Activemark and Healthy Schools and Eco awards.

At its last inspection the school was given a notice to improve because it required significant improvement in relation to pupils' standards and achievement in mathematics. In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## **Inspection judgements**

### Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

## The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

## **Main findings**

This is a satisfactory and improving school, with some good features. Its capacity to improve further is satisfactory. The school has made satisfactory progress overall in addressing the areas for development identified by the last inspection. Teaching remains satisfactory but is inconsistent. There is not enough good teaching. Leaders know where the weaknesses in teaching lie but they are not systematic enough in quickly remedying them. Assessment information is still not being used effectively to match work to pupils' differing abilities. One of the main reasons pupils are not performing better is because they are too often given work that consolidates their learning rather than extending it. The outdoor environment in the Early Years Foundation Stage is much better and promotes satisfactory learning. Planning in the Nursery is not sharp enough, particularly for child-initiated learning. Attendance is average and much improved. The level of persistent absence has significantly reduced.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall but inconsistent. Last academic year, the pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieved well in English and mathematics. In 2009, there was a marked rise in standards in Year 6 from significantly below average to average. Standards also rose in Year 2 but at a much slower rate. The school recognises that too few pupils reach the expected and higher levels of the National Curriculum, particularly in Years 1 to 4. The gap between the youngest boys' and girls' attainment in writing is too wide. A lot of support is provided for those with learning difficulties and it ensures the less able pupils make at least satisfactory progress over time. However, there is little targeted support for the more able. Standards are rising and pupils' progress is accelerating because teaching is better and inadequate teaching has been eliminated. The leadership of core subjects is much improved and English and mathematics programmes of study are more coherent which means that pupils' needs are now better catered for.

The headteacher is doing a good job and he is ably supported by the deputy and assistant headteachers, chair of governors and the mathematics leader. They are moving the school in the right direction. The local authority has provided good support and intervention to ensure the school raised its game. Sound self-evaluation has resulted in senior leaders having a secure understanding of the school's main strengths and weaknesses. This said, the school has a more positive view of teaching quality than inspectors do. This is primarily because leaders are not using pupil progress tracking data alongside the information gained from lesson observations to properly judge teaching quality. Much of the monitoring and evaluation work has been done by top managers, and there is recognition that the school must involve other subject and middle leaders in the improvement process to build and sustain the capacity for

improvement to prevent burn-out.

The chair of governors thinks the school has a lovely atmosphere. He is right. Pupils are happy, well behaved and have very good attitudes to learning. They enjoy coming to school and many join in the wide range of extra-curricular clubs. There are some very articulate speakers but this is not the norm. Pupils' speaking, spelling and handwriting skills are insufficiently developed. Teachers do not do enough modelling of language to improve pupils' vocabulary and grammatical skills. Pupils are well cared for and robust procedures are in place to safeguard them. The Eco and enterprise work is first rate. Provision successfully educates pupils about the importance of sustainability and the world of work.

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

- Raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - increasing the proportion of pupils reaching the expected and higher National Curriculum levels in all three subjects and narrowing the gap between the youngest boys' and girls' attainment in writing
  - improving pupils' spelling and handwriting skills and ensuring marking identifies weaknesses in both aspects so they can be quickly improved
  - ensuring staff model language structures to improve pupils' vocabulary and grammar skills
  - providing further targeted support and extension work for the more able.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching by:
  - making better use of assessment information to ensure work is closely matched to pupils' differing capabilities
  - improving the quality of planning in the Nursery so that learning outcomes, particularly for child-initiated activities are precise, shared with children and implemented effectively.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - being more systematic in following up weaknesses in teaching, learning and the use of assessment within challenging timescales
  - further refining the tracking of pupils' progress to determine the attainment and progress made by different groups against national norms
  - more closely aligning tracking data with the information gained from lesson observations to better judge teaching quality
  - involving more subject and middle leaders in the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work.
- About 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

3

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Improvements in learning and progress are bringing about improvements in attainment. The rate at which pupils acquire knowledge, skills and understanding in lessons, and over time, is variable. For example, in writing three quarters of pupils in Year 6 made good progress last academic year, whereas in Year 1 less than half did so. In reading, over the same period, three quarters of pupils in Year 5 made good progress, whereas in Year 4 less than half did so, and in Year 3 a fifth made slow progress in the subject. In the lessons seen pupils made generally satisfactory progress in achieving the lesson objectives, although there were occasions when pupils' progress was good. Pupils' rate of learning is accelerating faster in Years 5 and 6, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics than elsewhere in the school. This is due to improved curriculum provision, better teaching and targeted support, particularly for those who are not at the expected level in English and mathematics.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve satisfactorily, however, their rate of learning is better in Reception than in the Nursery. The planning for non-adult led activities in the Nursery is not robust enough, and the lack of clarity in the learning outcomes to be achieved is slowing children's progress. Realistic whole school targets have been set for Years 2 and 6 in 2010.

The rate of learning and progress for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those from minority ethnic backgrounds is satisfactory but variable. For example, most Year 6 pupils with special educational needs made good progress in their reading and writing in the last academic year, whilst in Year 4, a third of pupils with similar needs made slow progress in these areas over the same period.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive and they enjoy learning; however, some older pupils said they could be stretched more. Pupils work diligently on tasks even when they are not always matched to their specific needs. A good feature is that pupils know what their learning targets are and what National Curriculum level they are working at, so know what must be improved.

Other key features of outcomes for pupils:

Pupils behave well in class and around the school and there have been no exclusions in the past 12 months. Pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming.

Pupils have a good understanding of faiths and cultures different from their own. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are respectful and tolerant of those from different backgrounds.

Pupils feel safe and secure and say they are free from bullying and racism.

The school council and Eco committees are making a real difference. For example, recycling and energy-saving initiatives are protecting precious resources and saving money. The school regularly raises funds for local and national charities.

Pupils have a good understanding about how to keep healthy. They have set up initiatives to encourage others to cycle or walk to school because they know such activities benefit the environment and improve pupils' fitness levels. There is a very

good take-up of sporting activities after school.

All pupils are involved in enterprise activities and these help them gain an understanding of the world of work and help them acquire business acumen.

#### These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning		
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3	
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3	
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3	
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2	
Pupils' behaviour		
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles		
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community		
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being		
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance¹	3	
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		

## How effective is the provision?

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory; there is insufficient good teaching in each phase. The strengths are that staff form very good relationships with pupils. They give pupils praise and encouragement and are successful in creating a relaxed and happy atmosphere in lessons. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and key concepts are taught satisfactorily. A good feature at the start of many lessons is the sharing of lesson objectives so pupils know what they are aiming for. Lesson planning has improved but expectations as to what pupils can achieve are not generally high enough. Work is not always being properly matched to pupils' capabilities because teachers do not have a good enough understanding of what pupils can and cannot do, to inform planning. Pupils are too often taught things that they already know, rather than things that they do not know. Assessment data is used well to identify learning targets and pupils know

The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

what their targets are. Where teaching is good, it is mainly because work is demanding and activities are interesting and engage pupils' interest.

The curriculum is good at developing pupils' personal skills and well-being. Its contribution to developing their academic development is satisfactory. Literacy skills are being developed in other subjects, however, when pupils write they do not always have ready access to resources such as dictionaries, thesauruses, word banks and personal word lists to help them improve their writing. A wide range of extra-curricular provision is provided which pupils enjoy.

Pupils are well cared for. Transition arrangements for when pupils join and leave the school are good. Effective strategies have been adopted to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence.

#### These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account:  The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

## How effective are leadership and management?

Over the past year the school, with the support of the local authority, has moved forward. There is no air of complacency and the school improvement plan priorities are suitably ambitious. The headteacher has a clear vision and this is shared by governors and staff. The English and mathematics leaders have contributed well to the school's improvement. The work undertaken to improve teachers' subject knowledge and teaching methods has been effective.

Good use is made of performance data to intervene, particularly when underachievement is spotted. This said, the tracking of the attainment and progress of different groups is not sufficiently robust. The race equality plan does not make explicit the attainment of various groups compared with national norms. The school is not monitoring effectively the impact the race equality policy has on pupils, staff and parents. Nevertheless, the school is reducing the gap in pupils' attainment, thereby ensuring more equal opportunities for all. The monitoring of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but insufficiently robust in following up where specific weaknesses are identified. The governing body has kept a good eye on the school's improvement since the last inspection. The school has a larger than average budget surplus but governors have clear plans to spend the money wisely. Improvements to the accommodation have been well judged and ensure pupils learn in a modern and attractive environment. Effective links with parents are helping them become more involved in their children's education. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and at the time of the inspection met

government requirements. All staff, including the designated person, have been suitably trained to fulfil their child protection responsibilities. The school is actively promoting community cohesion and is reaching out to other communities locally and globally. The school has carried out a community cohesion audit and an action plan exists showing how it intends to improve this aspect. The evaluation of this work is at an early stage of development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account:  The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Provision is satisfactory. The breakfast club makes good provision for the youngest children that attend it. In the club the children mix well with the older pupils and this has a positive impact on their social and emotional development. Children start school with skills that are much lower than those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress given their original starting point. Most children make good progress in their personal and social development and some make good progress in Reception, particularly where teaching is effective. Children's attainment is significantly below the expected level when they enter Year 1.

Children are happy and well behaved. Teaching is satisfactory and there is an appropriate mix of adult-led activities and those chosen by the children. The planning of child-initiated activities in the Nursery is not robust enough. Staff are also not providing children with sufficient guidance when making choices to ensure that boys and girls do not undertake stereotypical activities. At lunchtime more could be done to encourage children to use knives and folks correctly and to make healthy eating choices.

Induction procedures and links with parents are good and this ensures children settle quickly into school routines. However, there is little formal evaluation of the impact of parental partnership work on school outcomes. Since the last inspection the children have moved into new accommodation and the outdoor provision is much improved. A suitable range of learning experiences is provided indoors and outside. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The ongoing assessment of children's progress is adequate, but the accurate evaluation of their attainment on entry requires further improvement.

#### These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

### Views of parents and carers

The number of parents who completed a questionnaire was quite low. Those that responded are happy with the quality of education provided and the way the school is being led and managed. A very small minority of parents feel that their child could make better progress and that they could be better informed about the progress made. A few judge that the school does not take account of parents' suggestions or concerns and it does not deal with unacceptable behaviour effectively. Inspectors judge that some pupils could make better progress. On the rare occasion when bad behaviour occurs it is deal with effectively. Good opportunities are provided to inform parents about their child's progress and there is evidence that leaders are taking notice of parents' views. For example, they have provided a shelter for pushchairs and organised a holiday club.

#### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Fallings Park Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 37 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 385 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	62	13	35	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	62	13	35	1	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	46	14	38	5	14	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	38	19	51	3	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	46	19	51	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	49	19	51	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	57	12	32	2	5	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	17	46	18	49	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	35	22	59	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	46	16	43	4	11	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	32	21	57	3	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	35	20	54	2	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	51	16	43	1	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## **Glossary**

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An oustanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

# Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## **Common terminology used by inspectors**

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.
	<ul> <li>The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>The quality of teaching.</li> <li>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



6 November 2009

**Dear Pupils** 

Inspection of Fallings Park Primary School, Wolverhampton WV10 8BN

Thank you for making me and the other inspectors so welcome when we visited your school recently. I am writing this letter to tell you what we found out. We enjoyed talking to you and the adults, looking at your work and observing what you were doing in lessons. Inspectors judge that your school is satisfactory and improving, with some good features.

We liked these things about your school.

The school has a lovely atmosphere. The headteacher and governors have done a good job improving the accommodation, particularly for the youngest children.

You enjoy school and you are now attending regularly. Your attendance is much improved and few are persistently absent.

You behave well and are keen to learn and give of your best.

You are well cared for and you say you feel safe and secure.

The Eco work that you do is very good. You rightly deserve an award for your efforts in saving the planet's precious resources. Your enterprise work is first rate.

Lots of you take part in the wide range of after-school clubs which you thoroughly enjoy.

Your parents are happy with what the school provides and there are good links between home and school.

The headteacher, staff and governors are moving the school in the right direction.

The school must do three things to improve further.

We want you to improve your reading, writing and mathematical skills and also your speaking, spelling and handwriting skills. We also want the more able to be further extended by giving them harder work.

Leaders must ensure you are well taught. Teachers must use assessment information better to ensure that work is well matched to your needs and ability. We want more lessons to be good and fewer satisfactory.

We have asked the senior staff and governors to get even better at checking how well

you and the school are performing. We want more teachers to be involved in evaluating the school's work.

Yours sincerely

David Rzeznik

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools

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