

Yarnfield Primary School

Yarnfield Road, Tyseley, Birmingham, West Midlands B11 3PJ

Inspection dates

3–4 July 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Over the past two years, too few pupils have reached the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.
- The most able pupils are not routinely challenged sufficiently in all classes. As a result, too few pupils currently reach the higher standards.
- The legacy of underachievement has not yet been eradicated. Some pupils in Years 5 and 6 have not yet caught up with their peers.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not yet consistently good across the school. Strengths evident in some classes and subjects are not evident in all.
- The organisation of the trust council in its current form hinders councillors in holding leaders rigorously to account. This is currently under review.
- The current curriculum lacks depth. Pupils do not fully develop their knowledge and understanding across a wide range of subjects.
- Although children do well when they first start school, provision in the early years is not consistently good across Nursery and Reception.
- Sometimes learning activities lack the challenge needed to maintain pupils' interest. As a result, standards of behaviour dip.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and the trust have taken decisive action to halt the decline across the school. The school is now on the up and improving very quickly.
- Across the school, teaching is improving and pupils are making faster progress. Standards are rising.
- A comprehensive assessment system is now in place. Leaders and staff use it skilfully to identify which pupils need further support.
- Arrangements to keep pupils safe are now effective. Leaders rigorously check that policies and procedures are followed. Parents and carers are confident that their children are safe at school.
- Pupils are well cared for. The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance levels have risen steadily and are now similar to national averages.

Full report

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - sharing the good practice that exists within the school and in other schools in the trust and the locality so that more teaching is consistently good or better
 - building on the improvements already made so that staff continue to develop and improve their teaching to help pupils make very rapid progress
 - further developing questioning so that pupils are helped to make links and connections with their prior learning.
- Continue to develop the effectiveness of leadership and management across the school by:
 - ensuring a smooth transition from academy council to local governing body so that leaders continue to be challenged and held to account and the pace of improvement continues
 - ensuring a rich, engaging curriculum is developed appropriate to pupils' needs and interests, which develops a love of learning.
- Improve outcomes for all pupils, especially 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.
- Continue to develop positive learning behaviours so that pupils remain focused in lessons and take responsibility for their own learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Significant changes at the highest level in the trust have had a positive impact on the school. Action taken by the new chief executive officer stabilised the trust and swiftly addressed inadequate leadership in the school. The decline has been halted and the school is now improving rapidly.
- Leaders and the trust are ambitious for the school. They want every child to succeed. A shared vision based upon aspiration, achievement and self-belief has been developed with all staff. Leaders know there is a legacy of underachievement across the school and are working hard to promote improvement in all areas.
- An effective model of school improvement is in place. The focus on strengthening leadership at all levels and improving the quality of teaching is ensuring that outcomes for pupils improve. The executive headteacher and head of school are an effective partnership. They provide strong leadership to the school. Since the last inspection, standards in all areas have improved and are no longer inadequate.
- Senior leaders know the school well. They use a robust, systematic approach to identify exactly 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 improvement.
- Leaders are tenacious in following up any weaknesses. Regular compliance checks help ensure that school policies and procedures are followed more consistently. Leaders know where aspects of good practice in the school lie. They use the information they gather to provide appropriate support and coaching for staff who need to develop their skills further. Teachers are held to account and leaders address underperformance quickly. As a result, there have been many changes in staffing this year, causing some turbulence and instability. This is beginning to settle down and a united staff team is now planning for the new academic year.
- Leadership roles have been reviewed and lines of accountability made clear. The staffing structure continues to be developed. Some leadership roles are currently filled on a temporary basis. Effective support from key leaders in the trust helps middle leaders lead developments in their subject areas. A good example of this is the work to develop the teaching of reading. This has led to increased expertise in this subject and a greater understanding of the role of a leader.
- Leaders are aware that further work is needed to improve the quality of teaching across the school. They have introduced an interim performance management process to quickly address the inconsistencies observed. They are refining the process in order to provide greater challenge and develop consistently good or better teaching across the school.
- Leaders track pupils' attainment and progress skilfully and regularly. Leaders work alongside staff to moderate pupils' work and ensure that judgements made are accurate. A new assessment system is used effectively to provide comprehensive data reports to the trust and academy councillors.

- The pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils is used well. Pupils receive additional support and encouragement irrespective of their ability. This is helping disadvantaged pupils to make accelerated progress.
- Specific funds for school physical education and sport are put to good use. Staff develop their skills in delivering high-quality sessions through the opportunity to work alongside different sports coaches. Pupils benefit from a range of after-school clubs. This improves their physical skills and abilities. Many more pupils are now participating in after-school clubs.
- Since the last inspection, the science curriculum has been a focus for development. Science is now taught regularly and training for staff has resulted in better subject knowledge. The wider curriculum is under development as it does not currently enable pupils to develop skills and deepen their understanding and knowledge in a range of subjects. Themed weeks such as 'World Cup week' are currently used to link subject areas together. However, leaders acknowledge that there is more work to do to embed the curriculum.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is emerging as a strength. Pupils are now able to demonstrate a secure understanding of fundamental British values and relate them to events in school and in the wider community. Leaders ensure that British values are threaded through the whole curriculum and take every opportunity to celebrate the diversity of the school community.
- Relationships with parents are better. Parents who spoke to inspectors were confident that their children were happy and safe at school. They said that leaders kept them informed about their child's progress. Some parents were anxious about the number of staffing changes, particularly at leadership level, but felt that the school is improving under the current leadership.

Governance of the school

- The trust has appointed an academy council to oversee the work of the school. Currently, the council monitors the work of two of the trust's schools. This has not been as effective as trust leaders want and so arrangements for school governance are changing. In the future, a local governing body will be in place and will monitor the work of one school only.
- The council is led by a knowledgeable and tenacious chair who visits the school regularly to check how quickly things are improving. Councillors recognise the journey of improvement that the school is currently on.
- Members of the council have appropriate skills and relevant expertise. They ask pertinent questions of leaders. They now receive regular data reports which they use to check pupils' progress. Councillors know where progress is not yet strong enough and the actions that are being taken to improve outcomes for all pupils.
- Councillors play an important part in ensuring that safeguarding procedures and policies are followed and that no child is at risk. Following the last inspection, they worked with the trust to ensure that appropriate systems for the safe recruitment of staff were put in place. They monitor this regularly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and the trust rapidly addressed the safeguarding concerns raised at the last inspection. Comprehensive procedures and systems are now in place. Leaders carry out regular checks to ensure that they are followed rigorously.
- A strong culture of safety exists in the school. There is a clear understanding of the duty of care to each and every pupil. All staff are appropriately trained and know what to do if they have the slightest concern about a child. School leaders work effectively with external agencies to ensure that, when concerns are raised, they are followed up quickly.
- Pupils are confident that the school is a safe place. They learn to keep themselves safe while using the internet and know not to share personal information. The youngest children learn about 'stranger danger'. Drama workshops help older pupils learn about radicalisation and knife crime. They learn how to deal with tricky situations when not at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. There is much that is good but there remain inconsistencies across the school.
- Leaders are making sure that teaching is improving. A rigorous cycle of monitoring, support and challenge has strengthened teaching across the school. Leaders are quick to support where improvements are needed. They ensure that good practice in the school and across the trust is shared and built upon.
- Leaders have provided high-quality training which is improving staff subject knowledge, particularly in the teaching of reading and mathematics. Trust specialist leaders coach and work alongside staff. They model effective practice and provide opportunities to observe outstanding practice at other schools. They carry out regular monitoring checks to see if improvements are being sustained and embedded.
- Subject-specific training is helping teachers plan a more effective sequence of learning built on pupils' prior knowledge. For example, in mathematics, a more consistent approach is being developed using pupils' number knowledge. Many teachers use questions effectively to help pupils make connections and develop better reasoning skills. Pupils are encouraged to use practical apparatus and visual images to prove what they are thinking. This is helping to engage pupils in their learning and deepen their understanding.
- Where teaching is stronger, there is an effective match of work to pupils' abilities. However, this is not the case across the whole school. Some pupils are not routinely challenged or encouraged to work independently. In other situations, pupils are moved on too quickly before they have really understood what they are learning to do. This results in some confusion. Knowledge and understanding are not secured or skills developed. There is still work to be done to ensure that planned learning, especially for the most able, takes account of pupils' starting points.
- The teaching of reading has improved as a result of participating in a 'transforming

reading' project. Clear guidelines have been shared with staff and expertise in the teaching of reading developed. Pupils have a well-developed love of reading. Many choose to participate in the reading clubs run each lunchtime or in the after-school book club. Consequently, outcomes in reading are rising across the school.

- The quality of support from other adults is variable. Some pupils benefit from effective support, reflected in adults' clear explanations, specific questioning and the appropriate use of practical resources. However, leaders acknowledge that not all adults are deployed effectively across the school. Progress slows as a result of overdirection and limiting pupils' independence. Leaders are beginning to address this issue through a weekly training programme and regular monitoring.
- Many teachers are skilled in encouraging pupils to reflect on their work. Pupils are beginning to think carefully about what they are learning to do. They talk with their partner to spot what went well and identify where they get stuck. They are developing the language of learning.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are positive and productive. Teachers know their pupils well. They know when to challenge or offer more support. Pupils follow instructions quickly and many have a strong work ethic.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are articulate and confident. They are keen to talk about their work. Pupils listen carefully to adults and to one another. In class, the vast majority of pupils work well together.
- Pupils who spoke to the inspectors said that they enjoy coming to school and feel safe. Pupils understand the different forms of bullying. They say that there is very little bullying at school and, when it does happen, they are confident that it will be quickly dealt with.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe both in and out of school. They learn to take risks in a safe environment and staff use every opportunity to discuss safety with them.
- Pupils have many opportunities to develop responsibility in a number of roles across the school. During the inspection, older pupils were observed organising lunchtime games for younger pupils. Student councillors, elected by pupils across the school, understand the characteristics needed to be an effective councillor. The head boy and head girl lead by example and encourage others to take pride in their school.
- Although many pupils continue to bring unhealthy snacks to school for breaktime, pupils do know what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy the opportunities to participate in a range of activities at lunchtimes with the sports coaches. Younger pupils talk enthusiastically about the menu choices on offer in the dining room and know that fizzy drinks are often bad for your teeth.
- Pupils who are vulnerable or who have complex needs are supported effectively to develop their social skills at lunchtime in a range of clubs. Adults work patiently with

pupils, helping them to take turns and share while playing card games. Other pupils include them in their games and give them encouragement. This is an inclusive school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Behaviour has improved since the last inspection. There is a sense of order and calmness around the school now. Pupils are polite, courteous and well mannered. A new behaviour policy has been developed with staff and pupils. Pupils understand the three school rules – be respectful, be responsible, be safe. Pupils know what constitutes good behaviour and what is expected of them.
- Behaviour on the playground is improving. Appropriate levels of supervision are in place but not all adults deal with incidents as quickly as they might. Some pupils continue to express concerns about playground behaviour. A small number say they do not always feel safe or that they will be listened to at lunchtime. Leaders monitor the situation closely and the number of incidents continues to fall.
- The majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They behave well in class, especially when the lesson interests and involves them. Some pupils continue to need reminding to focus on their learning. They can be passive or lose focus and this limits the progress they make.
- Leaders are tenacious in following up any absence from school. As a result, attendance is steadily improving and is now close to national averages. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has fallen this year. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are now attending school more regularly.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress has been too slow for a number of years, resulting in standards that are below those of other pupils nationally. There is a legacy of underachievement which current leaders are still addressing.
- Following the last inspection, the trust took action to deal with the inadequate leadership identified at the last inspection. This resulted in a period of instability and turbulence, during which little was done to improve rates of progress and raise standards. However, in September 2017, an interim principal stabilised the school and halted the decline in standards. Since the arrival of the executive headteacher and head of school in the spring of 2018, improvements have been even more rapid and the majority of pupils across the school are now making accelerated progress and standards are rising rapidly.
- Outcomes at the end of key stage 2 have been well below national averages for the last two years. In 2017, less than a third of pupils reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. Although school assessment data for current Year 6 pupils shows that outcomes have risen significantly, they remain below national standards due to the legacy of low expectations over time.

- At the end of Year 2, assessment results for reading, writing and mathematics have been below the national averages, especially in writing, for the last two years. There was a slight rise in 2017 and more pupils reached the higher standards in reading and mathematics. Outcomes at the end of key stage 1 have fallen short of the target set this year. However, this is a result of more accurate assessment and rigorous moderation across the school and the trust.
- As a result of higher expectations from new leaders and improvements in the quality of teaching, rates of progress for current pupils have risen sharply, although not yet consistently. The school's progress data, supported by work in pupils' books, shows that, in four out of six year groups, more than half of pupils are making strong progress. The gap with national averages is closing.
- The focus on securing early reading skills is having a positive impact. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 has risen and is now above the national average. This is built on as pupils move through the school. Leaders aim to ensure that every child is a reader.
- In previous years, some year groups had no pupils identified as higher attaining. Leaders have ensured that highly effective support for middle-ability pupils is helping some make very good progress. These pupils now reach the higher standards.
- Leaders track the progress of disadvantaged pupils in minute detail. They quickly identify those who are not making sufficient progress or who have barriers to learning. Short, time-limited, additional support is provided and monitored closely to check the impact. Many disadvantaged pupils are now making better progress and the gap with national outcomes is closing. This is not yet consistent across the school.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are not yet making consistently good progress from their different starting points. Recent improvements in tracking pupils' progress are helping teachers address gaps in learning. As a result, some pupils are now making stronger progress.
- Work in pupils' books indicates improved standards in science across the school. This is a result of more regular opportunities to study science and higher expectations from teachers. Progress and outcomes in other subject areas are not yet as strong because the wider curriculum is not yet fully embedded in all classes.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The early years requires improvement because teaching is not yet securely good and there are inconsistencies in provision.
- The majority of children enter the early years with skills and abilities that are below those typical for their age. Despite the inconsistencies across the provision, they make strong progress. The proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development has risen steadily over time and is now just below the national average. Children are now better prepared for life in Year 1.
- Analysis of assessment information and the tracking of pupils' progress are effective. Leaders work across the trust to moderate entry data and check it is accurate. As a result, there is a secure baseline now in place. It shows children in the current year

coming into school at a lower level than had been previously seen.

- Leaders work together to improve the quality of teaching in the early years. Some staff are skilled in identifying the needs of pupils. They adjust their plans in order to provide greater challenge and help children make faster progress. This is not yet consistent across the early years.
- The early years leader has an accurate view of the strengths of the provision and areas that require improvement. She works with senior leaders to monitor and evaluate the work of the early years team. This information feeds into an action plan with appropriate development targets. For example, the leader knows that there is more to be done to develop learning in the outdoor environment. While resources have been improved, learning activities do not yet routinely challenge all pupils.
- Children use their phonics knowledge well to read and write in independent activities. They use resources in the classroom, such as sound charts, to help them. Most-able readers sounded out words connected to the pirate topic. The focus on developing early reading skills helps children develop confidence as readers.
- Children enjoy writing. During the inspection, they worked with one another to write simple lists of real and fake words. Their writing books show a developing awareness of how to use punctuation accurately. Many of them are able to write simple sentences independently.
- Relationships in the early years are positive. Children work and play happily together. During the inspection, a group of children worked together in the water area filling containers with tiny beads. They shared the equipment and encouraged one another to 'do it carefully'. Routines are well established and children understand what is expected of them.
- Regular opportunities are provided for parents to be involved in their child's learning journey. Weekly 'show and tell' sessions enable parents to learn how best to support their children at home. Phonics workshops and mathematics sessions encourage parents to develop their understanding of the key skills their children are developing. Parents are confident that their children are happy and enjoying school.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective. Children learn to take risks in a safe environment. For example, children in the Nursery cut real carrots with knives while playing in the home corner. All appropriate welfare standards are met. Adults are vigilant and ensure that children are well cared for.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 139378 |
| Local authority | Birmingham |
| Inspection number | 10051867 |

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.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 686 |
| Appropriate authority | Ninestiles Academy Trust |
| Chair | Ateef Azam |
| Headteacher | Rena Ali |
| Telephone number | 0121 693 0362 |
| Website | www.yarnfieldprimary.org.uk |
| Email address | enquiry@yarnfieldprimary.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 4–5 April 2017 |

Information about this school

- Yarnfield is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school has been a member of the Ninestiles Academy Trust since July 2013. The trust had a new chief executive officer in May 2017. A new school improvement director was appointed in April 2018. The trust has established an academy council to support the monitoring of the school. The council is led by a chair and other nominated councillors. The school receives a range of support from the trust.
- The school's senior leadership team comprises an interim executive principal, head of school and four assistant principals. At the time of the inspection, three assistant principals were absent from school. The two substantive vice-principal posts were vacant. The trust placed two interim vice-principals in the school to support leaders until December 2018.

- The school has three classes in each year group from Reception to Year 6. It has a 52-place Nursery offering morning and afternoon sessions.
- The school runs a breakfast club each morning.
- Over 80% of the school's population come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Around two thirds of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- Approximately half the pupils are eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below the national average. The proportion of pupils requiring support for SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards in 2017, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2015, 2016 and 2017.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the special educational needs coordinator and subject leaders. Separate meetings were held with members of teaching and non-teaching staff, including those who had recently qualified as teachers. The lead inspector spoke with two members of the academy council, including the chair. A meeting was held with the chief education officer and the school improvement director of the trust.
- Inspectors made visits to all classrooms on both days of the inspection. Most of these visits were with school leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide selection of pupils' books from across the curriculum.
- Pupils were spoken to formally and informally. Two groups of pupils met with the inspectors. An inspector heard pupils read. Inspectors observed behaviour in classrooms, in corridors and outside on the playground.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day.
- Various school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plan and records of monitoring. Minutes of the academy council 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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