

# George Betts Primary Academy

West End Avenue, Smethwick, B66 1RE

## Inspection dates

28–29 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The executive principal, principal and other leaders have been extremely effective in accelerating pupils' progress and improving the quality of teaching.
- The academy has benefited greatly from its entry into the Elliot Foundation Academy trust.
- Leaders' extremely effective checks on the quality of teaching ensure that it continues to improve.
- Most pupils make good progress in English and mathematics.
- The high levels of personal care and support given to pupils contribute significantly to the success of this school. This results in the very positive climate for learning across the whole school.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good. Teachers' assessments are accurate and used very effectively to ensure that all pupils make good progress.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught and cared for well. They make good progress and are prepared well for Key Stage 1.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for their future lives in modern Britain.
- The provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is managed extremely well. These pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent in lessons and at all other times. Pupils are very polite, well behaved and respectful to adults and each other. This has a very positive effect on the rate of learning in lessons.
- There are highly effective procedures to ensure that pupils are safe. Bullying is very rare.
- Governors have an excellent knowledge of the quality of teaching and how well pupils are doing. They robustly hold leaders to account for the performance of the school.
- The school successfully engages increasing numbers of parents and carers in their children's education. Attendance has risen as a result.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' rate of learning varies across different subjects.
- Teachers' marking is not consistently effective in helping pupils improve their work and they do not always check that pupils act on the advice they are given.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 21 lessons. Several lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Senior leaders joined the inspectors in reviewing pupils' written work from the previous and current year.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons and at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors held discussions with the Executive Principal, Principal, senior leaders, staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector had meetings with five governors, the school's progress partner, and a representative of the academy trust.
- Pupils from Years 1, 2 and 6 were heard reading.
- Inspectors took account of the school's recent questionnaire as the number of responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) was too small to be considered. The 44 responses to the staff questionnaire were also taken into account.
- Two inspectors collected the views of parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors looked at the academy's policies, teachers' plans, samples of pupils' work, school improvement planning and records on behaviour and safety. Inspectors also looked at information on individual pupils' progress, teachers' appraisal and performance, and records of the meetings of the governing body.

## Inspection team

Michael Appleby, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Helen Masefield	Additional Inspector
Marie Thomas	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an above-average-sized primary school.
- The school opened as an academy in July 2013. The school is sponsored by the Elliot Foundation Academies Trust. The school is federated with Shireland Hall Academy. Both schools are led by the Executive Principal, but each has a Principal.
- This school provides support to other schools in the Elliot Foundation Trust and others in the local area.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is about one in eleven. This is below the national average.
- The pupil premium provides support for about half of the pupils in the school. This is above average. The additional funding is used to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- Approximately nine out of ten pupils are from minority ethnic heritages, mainly Pakistani and Indian. About two-thirds of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school operates before- and after-school provision.
- Children in the Nursery class attend part time for in morning or afternoon sessions. The children in the Reception class attend full time.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that all teachers:
  - ensure their marking and feedback is effective in helping pupils improve their work
  - check that pupils act on the advice they are given
  - capitalise on pupils' great thirst for learning and maintain a rapid rate of learning in all subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- The principal provides determined and inspirational leadership and is strongly supported by the executive principal, leaders, staff, governors and the academy's trust. The very strong teamwork and shared sense of direction have brought about rapid improvement. Additional leadership expertise, resources, and moderation opportunities through the trust have all enhanced the academy's development.
- Leaders have worked very closely with governors and the trust's advisors to produce a detailed development programme that is challenging and ambitious. This is based on an accurate assessment of the academy's performance.
- Continuous high-quality training has enhanced the skills of all staff. The outcome has been a marked and sustained improvement in the progress of pupils and the proportion achieving the standards expected for their age.
- Excellent policies backed up by focused support for staff has meant that pupils' progress improved significantly to be above the national average. This rate of progress in reading, writing and mathematics is the result of leaders' successful drive to improve the skills of teachers and other staff in the school.
- Senior and subject leaders work very closely with staff to support, guide and challenge them. They check the performance of staff extremely closely by conducting frequent visits to classrooms and use 'book looks' to check pupils' work and progress. Through the appraisal procedures, leaders robustly hold teachers to account and set very ambitious targets for the achievement of their pupils.
- The excellent new assessment system enables teachers and leaders to check pupils' progress frequently and identify quickly pupils at risk of falling behind. Immediate action is taken to give these pupils extra support to help them catch up.
- There is complete consistency of approach in the way staff support pupils, some of whom are significantly disadvantaged and often face acute challenges. Pupils' excellent behaviour enables lessons to proceed without interruption and so pupils' learning is rapid and effective. As one teacher wrote, 'The school does amazing things on a daily basis.'
- Leaders from this school provide advice and guidance to other schools within the academy trust and to other local schools. The school is visited by staff from other schools to observe the teaching of mathematics and to see the implementation of the new assessment system. This school has devised and implemented an excellent new assessment system, which is being used in over 200 other schools.
- Pupil premium funds are directed very effectively at supporting disadvantaged pupils and their families. As a result, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils in English and mathematics is as good as that of other pupils in the school. Leadership of the academy's work in this area is outstanding in overcoming barriers to learning and attendance. The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is rigorously checked and support provided so they achieve as well as other pupils in the school.
- The new curriculum is having a very positive impact on pupils' learning, achievement and preparation for the future. It makes a powerful contribution to the academy's outstanding promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. The curriculum is very well planned and provides pupils with many memorable learning experiences.
- The school is exceptionally successful at developing a harmonious and tolerant learning environment where all pupils respect others and feel included. Pupils develop a tolerant attitude to racial and religious differences, and understand the democratic process through class elections for the school council.
- The primary schools sport funding has been used exceptionally well to extend the range of physical education and sporting activities available to pupils during and after school. The sports coach effectively leads the physical education curriculum, and is providing an increasing number of opportunities for pupils

to take part in competitive sports.

- The school works very hard to develop very positive relationships with parents and carers, and successfully engages the more hard-to-reach families in their children's learning. Parents say that they feel very well informed and able to come into school to talk to staff if they need to. This has contributed to the rise in attendance, which is having a very positive impact on these pupils' progress and achievement.
- Attendance in 2014 was a little below average, but it is continuing to improve. Actions taken included class and pupil rewards, parent interviews, and a telephone call to parents if there is an unexplained absence.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are completely committed to improving the achievement and welfare of pupils and they have the highest expectations of school leaders and staff. The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements for safeguarding are fully met and checks that pupils feel safe and secure at all times.
  - Governors hold the school to account very robustly for pupils' progress. They understand data, analyse them, and question any underperformance by pupils or staff. They also check what the school is doing to tackle any shortcomings. Because they are very well informed, they are in a position to assess the school's achievements accurately and know how they compare with other schools nationally.
  - The governing body is very well informed about the management of teachers' performance. It works with the Principal in making decisions about pay increases that are clearly based on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress.
  - The governing body has a clear and comprehensive understanding of the school's finances. Governors have used additional funding very effectively to bring about significant academic progress for disadvantaged pupils, and provide an increased number and range of opportunities for pupils to take part in school activities and sport.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The exceptionally high standard of pupils' behaviour seen in lessons and around the school enables pupils to learn effectively and makes the school a very happy place to be. The views of parents, staff and pupils all support the inspectors' judgements.
- Pupils' highly positive attitudes to their own education and their thirst for knowledge are clearly apparent in lessons. They show very good concentration and perseverance when listening to the teacher or working on the task they have been given. Their work is neat and well presented.
- Pupils are very proud of their school. They enjoy taking on roles of responsibility, for example as school councillors and peer mentors, which they do very effectively. As one pupil put it, 'We work together to try and make things better for everyone at our school'.
- Staff follow the behaviour policy rigorously. Pupils are very clear about the rewards and sanctions system. The school's policy for behaviour is applied consistently by all staff throughout the school and this results in a very orderly learning environment.
- Pupils respect each other and work together very harmoniously from an early age. They treat everyone equally and without discrimination of any sort. The well-focused personal and social education sessions are very effective in improving their social skills and teaching them how to respect others. Evidence of the impact of this work was seen on the inspection where many pupils actively demonstrated the 'Be helpful to others' behaviour that the school was promoting that week.
- The school provides very effective support for the few pupils who find good behaviour difficult. Leaders are exceptionally successful in helping teachers, pupils and families develop and use strategies to support pupils who experience difficulties with their behaviour. As a result, these pupils gain the skills necessary to manage their own behaviour and succeed academically.

- Attendance has improved to be in line with the national average as a result of the school's successful actions to encourage better attendance and tackle persistent absenteeism. Parents are made fully aware of the importance of their children's full attendance. Pupils are punctual both to school and to lessons.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Safety practices and arrangements are very thorough and comprehensive. Comprehensive checks are carried out on all staff and visitors to make sure it is safe for them to work with children. All staff are very well trained and are clear about their responsibilities for protecting children. Pupils feel safe because of the high levels of care, guidance and support provided by all adults. As one pupil put it, 'Everyone looks after me.'
- Leaders and other staff are highly skilled at identifying any pupils at risk of harm and taking appropriate actions to ensure very successful outcomes for these pupils. There is a very high level of awareness amongst staff so they respond quickly and decisively to any concerns that arise. Records show that leaders are meticulous in following up incidents in order to ensure positive outcomes.
- Pupils feel extremely safe and know how to keep themselves safe because of the school's emphasis on teaching them about potential dangers. The school's excellent work in these areas is enhanced by regular sessions given by the NSPCC and Youth Support for Racial Tolerance.
- Parents expressed great confidence in the care the school provides for their children. Pupils take responsibility for their own and others' safety, such as the 'peer mentors' who look after younger pupils during break times.
- Records indicate there has been no bullying since the academy opened. Pupils are very aware of different types of bullying, including internet and racist bullying. They reported that bullying does not happen in their school. Where low-level incidents occur they say these are dealt with quickly and effectively by adults. Pupils have an excellent understanding of computer safety.
- The well-managed breakfast club provides pupils with a calm and productive start to the day, a healthy snack, and good opportunities to develop social skills. At the after-school club, pupils enjoy a range of activities in a caring and secure setting.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved across the school during the past 18 months and it is now consistently good. This has resulted in many pupils making rapid progress in English and mathematics. Progress measures in reading, writing and mathematics were above the national average in 2014.
- Teachers make good use of assessment information to plan work that is suitably demanding for pupils of all abilities. Teachers communicate enthusiasm for learning which engages pupils' interests and helps develop their very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils' outstanding behaviour ensures that they concentrate on their work without distraction.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language benefit greatly from the good teaching and additional support they receive and so they make rapid progress from their starting points.
- Teachers provide pupils with clear information about what they are going to learn and routinely check their understanding as the lesson develops. This enables them to correct any misconceptions or to provide more demanding tasks.
- Pupil premium funding is used exceptionally well to supplement teaching support and resources for pupils for whom the funding is intended. This helps to make sure that these pupils' progress is similar to or better than that of their classmates in English and mathematics.
- While there are some examples of high-quality marking, it is not consistent across the whole curriculum.

Pupils' work is marked regularly, but comments are not consistently effective in helping pupils improve. While marking supports good progress generally, not all teachers make sure that pupils respond to the advice they are given about what to do next or how to correct their mistakes.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- The progress being made by pupils in English and mathematics has increased considerably since the school became an academy. Most pupils are now making progress which is above the national average.
- A large majority of children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge below those expected at their age. About two thirds of children enter the Nursery speaking very little or no English. These children make good progress but the proportion achieving a good level of development is below the national average. Although they start Year 1 with below-average skills and understanding, their confident and positive attitudes enable them to make good progress in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils continue to make good progress and, by the end of Key Stage 1, their attainment is in line with the national average for writing and mathematics, but still below for reading. In 2014, the progress made by pupils during Key Stage 2 was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Attainment data from 2014 for pupils leaving at the end Key Stage 2 show that the proportions of pupils achieving the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics are in line with the national averages. The proportions of pupils attaining the higher levels are below the national averages. These pupils made good progress from their starting points, which were well below those typical for their age.
- Changes to the teaching of reading have improved the achievement of pupils over the past year. Reading is now taught very successfully in the early years through phonics (letters and the sounds they represent). The results of the Year 1 phonic screening check have risen and are now in line with the national average. Most pupils become competent and confident readers by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Pupils' writing skills are developed well because teachers give them clear guidance and opportunities to practise their skills. By the end of Year 6, pupils show a good knowledge of English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Pupils are given interesting activities to stimulate their writing, such as the jungle challenge experience and archery lessons for Year 6 literacy work based on 'The Hunger Games' book.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is very strong. The proportion of pupils making expected and better-than-expected progress is higher than the national average. Pupils' attainment is in line with the national average at the expected level but below average at the higher levels. The school's focus on developing pupils' mental calculation skills is enabling them to become increasingly competent and confident in handling calculations both mentally and in written form.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. They receive effective support from learning support assistants and the work set is well suited to their needs.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding was equal to that of their classmates in 2014. Their attainment was below that of other pupils. They were about one term behind their classmates in reading and mathematics, and two terms behind in writing. They were behind other pupils nationally by about two terms in reading, writing and mathematics. Current school assessment information and scrutiny of pupils' work by inspectors show there are now no significant differences in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others in any year group.
- The most-able pupils make good progress. This is evidenced by the work seen in pupils' books during the inspection, and the above-average proportions of pupils making expected or better progress.
- Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds make good progress and achieve equally as well as their classmates. Pupils who are at early stages of learning to speak English, particularly those who are new arrivals to Britain, make good progress in acquiring English.

- Although progress is better than average in English and mathematics, the pupils' work in some other subjects such as science and history shows slower rates of progress over time. Pupils' work in other subjects is of a very high standard in some classes but this is not always the case.

### The early years provision

is good

- The Nursery and Reception classes provide children with a good start to school life, where they thrive and make good progress. Most children start in the Nursery class with skills and knowledge that are well below those typical for their age, particularly in communication, language and social development. Two thirds of the children who enter the Nursery learn to speak English as an additional language, and some speak no English when they join.
- Children from all ability groups and backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress, but under half achieve a good level of development.
- As a result of good teaching, leadership and management, children make good progress. By the time they leave the Reception class, their attainment is getting closer to the national average. Staff work effectively as a team and use their detailed knowledge about each child's strengths and weaknesses to provide activities which moves their learning forward.
- Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. It is not outstanding as the children's progress from their starting points in literacy and mathematics is not sufficiently rapid to enable a large majority to catch up and gain the skills they need when they move on to Year 1
- Children work in a safe and happy learning environment. Clear routines are established quickly and, as a result, children work happily together in a calm, well-ordered setting where they can concentrate for increasingly long periods of time. The children's welfare and well-being are paramount and all safety procedures are carefully followed. Relationships between different groups of pupils and with the staff are excellent. Relationships with parents are also very positive.
- Adults engage purposefully with the children during their structured play, asking them to explain their ideas and understanding. Staff consistently take opportunities to improve children's ability to speak English. This extends the children's vocabulary, raises their confidence and improves their ability to express their thoughts clearly. Occasionally, however, the adults miss opportunities to help children improve their language skills or extend their ideas.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139565
<b>Local authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	449870

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	442
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Nargis Bostan
<b>Executive Principal and Principal</b>	Travis Latham and Allan Shephard (Principal)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 558 0472
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