

Prince Albert Junior and Infant School

Albert Road, Aston, Birmingham, B6 5NH

Inspection dates

4–5 February 2015

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | This inspection: | Outstanding | 1 |
| Leadership and management | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Quality of teaching | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Early years provision | | Outstanding | 1 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Every aspect of this school's work is exceptional.
- Outstanding leaders at all levels work exceptionally well together to ensure high quality teaching throughout the school. As a result, teaching is outstanding and pupils achieve exceptionally well.
- Governors have rightly supported the school's innovative approaches to organising the way pupils are taught. They have equally held senior leaders sharply to account for the impact of these decisions. Hence, governors have played a key role in the school's success.
- Leaders maintain a strong focus on continually improving the school. It has improved in every area of its work since the last inspection.
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They work extremely hard in lessons and conduct themselves sensibly around the school. Pupils make a significant contribution to the life of the school by carrying out responsibilities with great maturity.
- The school does everything possible to prepare all pupils for life in modern democratic Britain. The core values of commitment, respect, friendship, honesty, equality and understanding permeate all that the school does.
- Teaching is precisely focused on the needs of each and every pupil. Teachers are exceptionally skilled at identifying what each pupil needs to learn next. Learning activities are skilfully designed so each pupil is suitably challenged.
- Pupils' newly acquired skills are reinforced through interesting activities which allow them to explore and investigate purposefully.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very hard to ensure all pupils speak and understand English very well. The emphasis on building pupils' spoken language helps them become capable readers and writers. Teachers use pupils' good speaking, listening and thinking skills to help pupils learn successfully in mathematics, science and a wide range of other subjects.
- Procedures for keeping pupils safe and secure are of the highest quality.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage provides an exceptionally good start for children. They settle in and start learning English quickly. Children make excellent progress, so by the time they complete the Reception year, they are exceptionally well-prepared to start Year 1.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils’ learning in 32 lessons and through a series of walks around the school. While visiting lessons, inspectors looked at the work in pupils’ books and talked to them about their learning.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils’ writing, mathematics and other exercise books and heard some pupils read. They observed playtime and lunchtime activities and visited the breakfast club run by the school.
- Meetings were held with: the executive headteacher, head of school and other senior staff; a group of teachers and teaching assistants; the Chair and other members of the governing body; groups of pupils, and a representative of the local authority. A telephone conversation was held with the school’s improvement partner. Inspectors spoke informally to other staff and pupils as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 45 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), spoke to parents as they brought their children to school and met with one parent who requested to speak to an inspector.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, which included: the school’s checks on how well it is doing and plans for improvement; evidence about how teachers are set targets to improve pupils’ progress; records of the school’s checks on the quality of teaching; minutes of meetings of the governing body; information about pupils’ progress over time; and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Sandra Hayes, Lead inspector | Her Majesty’s Inspector |
| Linda Jacobs | Additional Inspector |
| Faheem Chishti | Additional Inspector |
| Damian Booth | Additional Inspector |
| Deana Holdaway | Her Majesty’s Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a very large primary school located to the North of Birmingham city centre.
- Most pupils are of Bangladeshi or Pakistani origin and speak English as an additional language. The very large majority are beginners in English when they join the school.
- Just under half of the pupils are disadvantaged and eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in care). This is higher than that in most schools.
- Just over a third of the pupils are disabled or have special educational needs. This is much higher than in other schools.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of six Nursery groups and six Reception groups known as 'family groups'. Children attend both full-time.
- A breakfast and after school club, managed by the governing body, operates on the school site.
- The school has a large team of pastoral staff that supports the welfare and wellbeing of pupils and families. This team is based in a designated area of the school, known as 'The Arches'.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has established a teacher recruitment programme in conjunction with a number of local universities and works closely with a local grammar school to provide broader experiences for pupils.
- The school has been visited by headteachers and other senior education professionals from across the West Midlands to learn from the school's approach to teaching pupils for whom English is an additional language.
- Learning for pupils in Years 1 to 3 is organised in the same way as in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This means pupils experience a combination of adult-led activities, including direct teaching, and opportunities to identify what they wish to do for themselves.
- In January 2013, the then headteacher was asked by the local authority to provide support to address weaknesses at Heathfield Primary School in Handsworth. After a period of significant turbulence within Heathfield School, the two schools are now fully federated. The federation is governed by a single governing body. The former headteacher is now executive headteacher at both schools. The previous deputy headteacher is now head of school at Prince Albert. Other senior staff have specific roles within Prince Albert and across the federation.
- The executive headteacher is a local leader in education (LLE). This is a designation awarded by the National College for Teaching and Leadership in acknowledgement of a headteacher's proven capacity to lead successful school improvement.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The success of this school is testament to the visionary and innovative leadership of the executive headteacher and head of school. They have created a formidable team committed to achieving excellence at every opportunity; everyone in school feels part of that team. This was summarised by a member of support staff who said, 'It's a privilege to work with and for this team.'
- The executive headteacher used challenges encountered during the period of support given to Heathfield School to review and renew leadership structures. Layers of leadership provided by the executive team, in-school senior leaders, assistant headteachers, subject leaders and teachers with other responsibilities create exceptionally robust leadership. All leaders share a cohesive vision and play their full part in implementing the school's policies and procedures to great effect.
- From the business-like approach to creating a corporate environment, to the precisely targeted and personalised focus on teaching, every aspect of the school's work is designed to achieve maximum impact. Only the very best will do. For example, rigorous recruitment procedures ensure only the very best candidates are considered for posts at the school and only the most exceptional are appointed. Continuous evaluation and reflection is built in to all processes, allowing nothing to stand still, thus ensuring every aspect of the school's work is of the highest possible quality.
- Leaders use impressively interlinked systems to set challenging targets for pupils' achievement; record pupils' progress; monitor the quality of teaching; and provide support and challenge to help teachers improve. This process is centred on assuring the best outcomes for each and every pupil. This is why no pupil is left behind and achievement is outstanding.
- The innovative approach to organising pupils' learning; the high degree of flexibility that is used within teaching groups; the exceptionally strong focus on developing outstanding speaking and listening skills; and the rich, exciting experiences on offer ensure pupils acquire skills in a wide range of subjects. As a result, pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stages in their education.
- The school's values, reinforced through all aspects of school life, promote equality. Theme weeks include features of British culture. Pupils' understanding of citizenship is developed purposefully and sensitively through different subjects. Pupils practise democracy in the way they elect school council members and 'mini leaders'. Pupils consider a range of different faiths, beliefs, customs and celebrations. All pupils develop a strong sense of right and wrong and understand the importance of tolerance and respect. When comparing Christians and Muslims, one pupil wrote, 'Both religions teach us, regardless of what skin colour, hair colour, race, age or looks, we should treat each other equally.'
- The school places itself at the heart of a community hub. Staff go out of their way to engage with parents and enable them to play a full part in their children's education. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, parents are closely involved in building a picture of children's growing skills and interests. As pupils move through the school, parents are well supported to help their children with learning at home. Parents receive detailed information about their children's achievements. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Many were keen to explain that this was their school of choice. Furthermore, leaders go out of their way to support community members in achieving qualifications and furthering their own professional prospects.
- The local authority recognises this school as a beacon of excellence. This is why it approached the school to support Heathfield Primary. The local authority hopes to continue using the expertise in this school to support other schools in the future.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has trusted and supported the executive headteacher to realise his vision and ambition for this school, at the same time holding him rigorously to account for the impact of his decisions.
 - Governors form part of the integrated approach to monitoring the school's work. Consequently, they

have an impressively detailed knowledge of its effectiveness. For example, they maintain a close scrutiny of data about pupils' achievement and the implications for groups of pupils in this school.

- Governors are fully involved in decisions about teachers' salaries and ensure these reflect the achievement of governors' high expectations for pupils' achievement.
- Governors frequently check that staff are following agreed safeguarding practices and take immediate action if any aspect falls short of their very high expectations. As a result, all safeguarding procedures are rigorously maintained and highly effective.
- Governors rigorously check that funds are effectively used. For example, governors have challenged leaders to demonstrate that decisions made about the primary school sports funding and pupil premium funding expenditure support the school's equalities policies. As a result, this additional funding has led to all pupils achieving well and having access to frequent, high quality sporting and physical activity.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The work of the highly effective pastoral team and the excellent role models provided by all adults ensure that impeccable behaviour is central to the culture of the school.
- The inspirational environment portrays a sense of aspiration and endorses a value for learning. Photographs of successful ex-pupils displayed in the entrance hall inspire pupils to be ambitious. The smart, professional décor shows pupils they are valued and respected. Pupils rise to these expectations. They are immensely proud of their school, keep it looking immaculate and take great pride in showing it off to visitors.
- Pupils are attentive and alert in lessons. They apply themselves eagerly to their own work and support classmates to do the same. When not being directly taught by an adult, pupils take a tremendous degree of responsibility for their own learning. Children in the Early Years develop equally positive attitudes to learning and learn to get on with others.
- Playtimes are active and fun. In spite of the limited space, pupils participate safely in an impressive range of physical activities. This is because playtimes are well structured and carefully supervised. Peer mentors play a valuable part in keeping playtimes happy, helping younger pupils learn to share and take turns, although, as one told an inspector, 'We don't really have to do much because everyone gets on.'
- There are many other opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and contribute to the effective running of the school, such as by being on the school council or being 'mini leaders', prefects and librarians. Pupils take these responsibilities seriously and carry out their duties with pride.
- Pupils show genuine tolerance and respect for one another. They use polite language when talking to, and about, one another. When speaking to adults, pupils are warm and friendly, yet demonstrate respect. No incidents of bullying have been reported this year. Pupils spoken to confirm they are not aware of it happening, although they show they understand what it is and would be able to take appropriate steps should it occur.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. All staff are trained to a high level in how to safeguard pupils and protect them from extremist influences. Visitors are thoroughly checked and fully briefed about child protection and safety matters. Procedures for dealing with concerns about pupils set a high benchmark for other schools to follow.
- Health and safety procedures, as demonstrated by an unplanned fire alarm during the inspection, ensure pupils are protected from risk of harm.
- The relentless focus by the pastoral team on attendance, the motivating rewards on offer for good attendance and the degree to which pupils enjoy their time at school have ensured that attendance continues to improve and is now above average.

The quality of teaching**is outstanding**

- Teaching in this school is precisely focused on the needs of each and every pupil. Teachers are very skilled at spotting what each pupil needs to learn next in every subject. Teachers' and teaching assistants' skilful use of this knowledge ensures pupils make rapid and sustained progress in a wide range of subjects.
- Children the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1 to 3 experience purposeful adult-led sessions, in which they learn, develop and practise relevant skills. Balanced with these high-quality teaching groups, are cleverly designed opportunities for pupils to explore, investigate and apply their skills. Excellent levels of interaction between adults and pupils during these self-chosen activities ensure pupils remain interested, enthused and eager to deepen their understanding. Their experiences help pupils to become confident, self-motivated learners who take a high degree of responsibility for their own learning.
- Pupils in Years 4 to 6 experience the same high quality of teaching. In the mornings, this is largely focused on English and mathematics. Afternoon lessons include opportunities for pupils to apply reading, writing and mathematics skills in other subjects (known by pupils as 'learning for life' lessons). In this way, teaching helps prepare pupils for their move to secondary school.
- All teachers and teaching assistants watch and listen carefully to pupils; ask sophisticated questions to challenge pupils and probe their understanding; make well timed and relevant comments to pupils about their work and prompt pupils to move on to something more challenging the minute they are ready. This is why pupils make rapid progress in lessons and achieve so well over time.
- All adults persistently develop pupils' English language capability through modelling high quality spoken English. Adults expect even the very youngest pupils to use correct technical words, for example when talking about writing skills or mathematical strategies. This helps pupils to speak articulately and write clearly, using interesting and ambitious language.
- Knowledge about letters and the sounds they make (known as phonics) is taught effectively to younger pupils. Teachers plan a range of suitable activities for pupils to deepen understanding of authors, make choices about the books they read and to develop different approaches to reading. As a result, pupils read confidently for different purposes.
- Teachers are very skilled at teaching writing. The strong emphasis on teaching grammar ensures pupils learn to write accurately and fluently. Teachers inspire pupils to write by enabling them to use their skills impressively in interesting, real-life contexts.
- Pupils acquire excellent mathematical understanding because teachers help them to see how mathematics works. They do this by designing tasks that enable pupils to explore and investigate mathematically. Teachers reinforce pupils' growing mathematical knowledge through excellent marking of their work.

The achievement of pupils**is outstanding**

- The development of pupils' communication skills is at the heart of the school's work. It is highly successful in its aim. Very few pupils speak English when they join the school. From the very start, all adults model the highest quality spoken English and support pupils, and their parents, to do the same. As pupils move through the school, they rapidly build confidence and soon become articulate, effective communicators. This focus on building understanding of English through speech gives pupils a strong foundation for developing reading and writing skills.
- Pupils learn to love reading and speak enthusiastically about visits to the school library. Even very young pupils use phonics skills (letters and the sounds they make) confidently to accurately read new words.
- Pupils are very keen to write and learn to write well from a young age. They write using increasingly complex and interesting sentences as they get older, which are often typical of those written by older

pupils in other schools. All pupils have an impressive command of subject-related vocabulary.

- Pupils develop secure mathematical knowledge which they confidently apply to solving challenges and problems. For example, Year 6 pupils, faced with algebra for the first time, were able to spot patterns in numbers and use mathematical strategies to help them find solutions.
- Children enter Nursery with significant gaps in their knowledge and skills. There are notable differences in the skills of boys and girls. Boys' skills are considerably weaker than those of girls. At the end of Reception in July 2014, almost half of the children achieved a good level of development. Given their starting points, this is a higher proportion than might be expected. This is because children make excellent progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils build rapidly on the skills they have developed in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Boys begin to catch up with girls. National assessment results do not reflect the swift progress pupils have made in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because pupils' skills on entry are so weak, that pupils in recent years had not quite reached average standards by the time they entered Year 3. Pupils currently in Year 2 are attaining well. Many are working above the standards expected for their age.
- As pupils move through Years 3 to 6, they sustain rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and so improve their levels of attainment significantly. Since the previous inspection, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has improved at over twice the national rate. Standards in Years 1 to 6 are currently at least in line with expectations for pupils' ages. Many pupils are working beyond this. Each term, the proportion working at these higher levels is increasing.
- Results of the Year 6 national tests in reading, writing and mathematics taken in May 2014, suggest many pupils had not made the progress expected of them in recent years. Inspection evidence confirms that this does not present a true picture of the achievement of these pupils. Their skills were not accurately represented by their 2010 Key Stage 1 outcomes because they were overestimated. Upon joining the school, the headteacher (now executive headteacher) identified insecure assessment in Key Stage 1. He acted quickly to ensure assessment was precisely accurate by the time of the 2011 results.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make progress that is at least in line with other pupils. In many cases, the extra help they receive means these pupils are making even swifter progress, helping them to catch up with their classmates.
- Effective use of the pupil premium ensures disadvantaged pupils achieve very well. In the end of Key Stage 2 national tests in 2014, disadvantaged pupils' scores were very close to, or in line with, those of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The most able pupils are well challenged. Tasks are pitched appropriately, so these pupils make good progress in lessons. Their books show these pupils achieve well. As with other groups of pupils, national test results in 2014 do not fully represent the improvement in skills made by the most able pupils in their time at the school.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children enter Nursery with significant gaps in their knowledge and skills. They find it difficult to work alongside other children and are heavily dependent upon adult leadership and help.
- Teachers quickly assess the abilities of all children in their home language and plan experiences and activities that quickly build children's vocabulary and ability to complete simple tasks. All adults frequently check children's progress so that all activities and tasks are planned to systematically develop the children's skills.
- By the end of the Reception year, children make excellent progress from their starting points. They are particularly successful in their physical development, self-confidence and ability to make relationships.

- The learning area inspires discovery and investigation. There is an excellent balance of adult-led and child-led activities. Interactions between adults and children provide many opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills. Adults speak clearly so words are modelled correctly for children.
- The early years staff have developed links with a local children's centre. The children's centre provides valuable speech therapy where appropriate and ongoing support for parents. Staff conduct home visits before the children attend Nursery and provide workshops to help parents settle their children quickly into Nursery routines.
- All adults prepare lively, interesting areas for the children to plan, experiment and learn. Teachers and assistants explain and question skilfully so that children listen attentively and with genuine interest. Every day, adults review the learning and plan the next steps. A particular strength of the teaching is that adults facilitate, rather than dominate, learning.
- Children know their routines and move confidently between activities. They consider their own safety when climbing or balancing and show increasing confidence. They are eager to learn. Children quickly learn to share, take turns and play happily with others.
- The Early Years' leader has an accurate understanding of the needs of the children in Nursery and Reception. She ensures that all staff have appropriately high expectations for the children. Frequent training for all staff and ongoing support ensures that skills are continuously developed and sharpened. There is no sense of complacency and all staff share a strong commitment for the children's success as they enter Year 1.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 103154 |
| Local authority | Birmingham |
| Inspection number | 449297 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 739 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Najma Razaq |
| Headteacher | Phillipa Downes (Sajid Gulzar Executive Head) |
| Date of previous school inspection | 20 September 2010 |
| Telephone number | 0121 327 0594 |
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