

Ferndale Primary School

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

Unique reference number (URN): 103982

Inspection report: 30 June 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	● ●
Expected standard	● ● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✓ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders have established an aspirational attendance culture that motivates pupils to come to school. They have worked extensively to communicate their high expectations with the pupils and families. Leaders systematically track absences for all pupils. They then work intensively to reduce any barriers to attendance. This includes supporting families with advice and guidance from external agencies. As a result, attendance rates for all groups of pupils have improved over time and are above average. Rates of persistent absence have reduced. This is particularly notable for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Leaders have equally high expectations of how all pupils should behave. They ensure that staff teach and support pupils to know what is expected of them. As a result, the school is calm and purposeful and pupils can focus fully on their learning. Relationships are positive and pupils are proud to be role models for others. During lunchtimes and playtimes, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They enjoy playing together and can visit the buddy stop if they need help. Staff make responsive and reasonable adjustments when applying the behaviour policy, which means that pupils with SEND are supported well. Pupils are confident that staff will support them and deal with any concerns that they have, including bullying. Suspensions are used appropriately.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders prioritise the personal development of all pupils. They have created an ambitious and inspiring programme that reflects the school's context. Leaders have carefully designed the curriculum to teach children about diversity. This helps pupils to deepen their understanding of respect and tolerance very well. Pupils visit different places of worship to help them learn about faiths and religions. Fundamental British values are taught in a meaningful way, through assemblies, classwork and experiences. Pupils are able to talk about these values in a mature and knowledgeable way.

A carefully planned programme of relationships, sex and health education supports pupils to understand issues, such as puberty and healthy relationships. Staff teach pupils about protected characteristics and ensure that pupils know how to recognise and challenge stereotypes. Leaders have established effective systems to support pupils' mental and physical health and wellbeing, including ensuring that specialist agencies are available in the family hub.

Leaders have developed 'Ferndale 50' to broaden pupils' experiences. For example, pupils meet authors and scientists to support and widen their aspirations. They take part in projects that enhance their understanding of different cultures, such as the South Bengali arts project. As part of this work, pupils visited an exhibition and showcased their own creations. Leaders ensure that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, fully take part in enrichment opportunities. This allows pupils to develop new interests and talents.

Leaders empower the junior leadership team by giving them important responsibilities. For example, pupils have helped to create reflection areas throughout the school. They have also installed lending libraries across the site, so that pupils and families enjoy access to a wider range of books. Pupils leave Ferndale very well prepared for their next steps.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils typically develop appropriate knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics. While some outcomes in public examinations are variable, most pupils achieve in line with national averages over time. Disadvantaged pupils' outcomes have been close to national averages. There is a high number of pupils who leave and join the school at different points, which affects published performance information.

Leaders are committed to supporting all pupils to make secure progress from their starting points, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are at the early stages of learning English.

Generally, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. They develop knowledge and skills across the wider curriculum. Pupils talk confidently about their learning and can recall important knowledge from previous learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have established a broad curriculum that is well organised and builds up knowledge and skills. They have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement needed in the quality of teaching. They have supported teachers well to enable them to teach in a more engaging and supportive way. This has had a positive impact on pupils' attitudes towards learning.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They explain new learning by breaking it down into manageable steps. Typically, teachers adapt their teaching effectively to ensure pupils with additional barriers can access the learning. At times, this is not as precise for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers ask regular questions to check pupils' understanding. This means that they address misconceptions quickly and provide additional interventions to prevent any gaps in learning.

The school prioritises the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. Overall, this is effective and pupils typically build up their knowledge and skills well. Despite the decline in the 2025 outcomes, the teaching of phonics is generally effective. Pupils begin to learn sounds in Nursery and build on this knowledge through Reception and key stage 1. Pupils read books which are well matched to their needs. Pupils at the early stages of reading have opportunities to practise their skills with well-trained staff to develop their fluency.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders recognise the importance of the early years to give children the best start in education. They have put in place an ambitious curriculum that identifies the knowledge, skills and vocabulary that children will learn. Teachers use stories and rhymes to support children's language skills and deepen their understanding.

Staff care for children and ensure that they feel safe and secure. Teachers make responsive adaptations for children who need additional support, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This enables them to access the learning alongside their peers.

Interactions between adults and children support most children to make progress. Well-trained staff teach children in the Nursery to develop their independence. As a result, they typically have the confidence and resilience to make a smooth transition to Reception.

Children are generally taught how to read and write using phonics effectively. Teachers are skilled at supporting children to develop their physical skills, including how to hold a pencil and form letters correctly. However, as children move through the early years, some learning activities do not enable children to build on what they already know and can do. This means that some pupils are not as well prepared for Year 1 as they could be.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders prioritise ensuring that this is an inclusive, welcoming school. They are highly focused on breaking down any barriers to learning and/or wellbeing that pupils may face. Leaders know their pupils well and identify quickly the needs of those who are more vulnerable. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Typically, the support that pupils with SEND receive reduces barriers to learning. Leaders set out clearly the steps and support that are required to address their barriers. However, for pupils with the most complex needs, leaders do not ensure that targets are consistently reviewed in a timely way. This means that the support is not as precise as it could be.

Leaders ensure staff make effective adaptations to support pupils who speak English as an additional language. This enables them to benefit from studying the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders also support families, who are at the early stages of learning English.

Leaders use additional funding carefully to support disadvantaged pupils to reduce barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing. As a result, these pupils achieve and attend well. The school works closely with external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils are well supported. Staff provide effective pastoral support, which helps pupils to feel cared for and develop a sense of belonging.

The school makes appropriate use of alternative provision.

Leaders have created a culture of high expectations across the school community. Leaders know the context of the school and the pupils very well. They maintain a careful oversight of pupils' wellbeing and academic progress and make effective changes, when improvements are needed. For example, the teaching methods leaders have recently implemented, using evidence-based research, are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement and attitudes to learning. Leaders are consistently ambitious to improve outcomes for all pupils.

Leaders routinely consider staff workload and wellbeing. They model professionalism and ensure that staff are listened to. As a result, staff feel well supported and valued. Leaders ensure that staff have the professional expertise to support all pupils. They provide a wide range of professional learning opportunities that are well matched to teachers' development and bespoke needs.

Parents and carers speak positively about the school and trust the support that leaders and staff provide. Leaders prioritise removing barriers for pupils and families. They know their community well and are a first point of contact and support for many families.

Governors provide an effective balance of support and challenge to leaders. They are knowledgeable about the work of the school and uphold their statutory responsibilities well. They know what is working and what aspects need further improvement. Governors also make appropriate checks on how leaders manage staff workload and support their wellbeing by visiting the school regularly.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils are proud to be part of this inclusive school. Leaders support them to live out the school values of 'belong, believe and achieve'. Each morning, staff greet pupils warmly, helping them to feel ready for their day. The school community celebrates its diversity, and pupils have a deep understanding of the importance of equality.

Pupils make appropriate progress from their starting points across the curriculum. Leaders identify barriers quickly and take appropriate steps to address them. Effective teaching supports pupils to understand and talk about their learning. Pupils' outcomes in national examinations are typically in line with the national averages. As a result, pupils are ready for their next steps.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe. They are confident that they will be supported by trusted adults. Bullying is rare and staff address it promptly. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn about online safety and how to keep safe in the local area, including near roads and railways.

Pupils behave very well. Leaders ensure that pupils understand the high behaviour expectations. They set clear routines and teach pupils to follow these carefully. This means that the school is calm and pupils consistently display positive attitudes towards their learning.

Pupils are proud to take on leadership roles. For example, they have helped to design the new school toilets. Pupils value the knowledge and skills that they gain from these experiences. Pupils take part in many extra-curricular activities that are targeted to meet their needs. For example, pupils learn to cook healthy meals with produce they have grown themselves. The curriculum is enriched with educational visits to local places that help pupils to link their learning to the wider world.

Pupils are well known by leaders and staff, meaning that they benefit from the highly effective pastoral support that they receive. The family hub facility enables this support to extend to their families.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the targets for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are reviewed in a timely way, so that their support is precisely matched and adapted to meet pupils' needs and enable them to build successfully on their learning. This is especially the case for pupils with education, health and care plans.
 - Leaders should ensure that early years provision is carefully planned and based on what children know and can do to enable them to build on their prior learning more effectively, so that they are prepared successfully for Year 1.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Mr Steve Sparkes.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with school leaders during the inspection. They met with the chair of governors and other representatives of the governing body. They held meetings with the headteacher, school leaders, teachers and pupils. They talked with pupils and looked at their work. They also talked to pupils, parents and staff to gather information about school life.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently makes use of one registered alternative provision.

Headteacher: Ruth Gillett

Lead inspector:

Jess Chambers, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Declan McCauley, Ofsted Inspector

Christian Hamilton, Ofsted Inspector

Lisa Montandon, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from [different sources](#). More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

 The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 30 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

584

Well above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

678

Well above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

32.71%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

3.42%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

14.38%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English indices of deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

OTH - Other Difficulty/Disability, ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	53%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	66%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	46%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	50%	60%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	69%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	81%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	64%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	62%	73%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	69%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	68%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	70%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	69%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	63%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	71%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	54%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	65%	73%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	44%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	59%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	32%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	42%	44%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	57%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	72%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	46%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	52%	60%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	59%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	66%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	46%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	64%	58%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	52%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	62%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	43%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	52%	59%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	44%	68%	-23 pp
2024/25 (final)	59%	69%	-11 pp
2023/24 (final)	32%	67%	-35 pp
2022/23 (final)	42%	66%	-24 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	57%	80%	-23 pp
2024/25 (final)	72%	81%	-8 pp
2023/24 (final)	46%	80%	-33 pp
2022/23 (final)	52%	78%	-27 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	59%	78%	-19 pp
2024/25 (final)	66%	78%	-13 pp
2023/24 (final)	46%	78%	-31 pp
2022/23 (final)	64%	77%	-14 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	52%	80%	-27 pp
2024/25 (final)	62%	81%	-18 pp
2023/24 (final)	43%	79%	-37 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	52%	79%	-28 pp

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	4.7%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.5%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.5%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	9.7%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	15.4%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	13.6%	16.2%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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