

Bentley West Primary School Additionally Resourced for Hearing Impaired

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104174
Local Authority	Walsall
Inspection number	377025
Inspection dates	17–18 October 2011
Reporting inspector	James Henry

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	450
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Lee
Headteacher	Rod Dickson (Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	16 March 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They visited 23 lessons and observed 15 teachers. Meetings were held with the Principal, senior staff, members of the governing body and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school improvement plans, data showing pupils' progress, individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, records of teaching observations and an analysis of pupils' work. Also, 114 parents' and carers' questionnaires, as well as others from pupils and staff, were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress of pupils, especially girls, across Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- The quality of teaching in meeting the needs of different groups of pupils, especially girls and those with hearing impairments.
- The impact of the new senior leadership team in bringing about improvements in the school's work.

Information about the school

The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The large majority of pupils come from White British heritage. A few pupils come from Indian, Pakistani or Black Caribbean heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is below average. Most of these pupils have speech and language difficulties. The school has additionally resourced provision for 10 hearing-impaired pupils. At present, there are nine pupils in school who are supported through the provision.

The school is part of a 'hard' federation with another local primary school and a children's centre on the school site that also has nursery provision. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the school are taught in a Nursery and in a Reception class. The Principal of The Bentley Federation took up his post in May 2011 and is acting headteacher of Bentley West Primary School. The school holds, among other awards, National Healthy School, Artsmark Gold and Investors in Pupils.

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

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Bentley West is an improving school, where pupils enjoy their education. That is because the school is a pleasant, welcoming place, where all are valued. Good care and support for pupils are a high priority for all staff. As a result, pupils feel safe in school and have confidence in staff to help them with any problems that may arise occasionally. Pupils described the 'worry boxes' in classrooms and around the school positively that could be used if they wished. 'We have loving and caring teachers who will always help you' was one young pupil's opinion. Most of the responses from the parents' and carers' questionnaires agreed with the pupil's opinion. Pupils take on responsibilities around school willingly. There is an effective school council and older pupils act as playground mediators and 'buddies'. Pupils have a good understanding of different cultural communities and other faiths. They have good opportunities also to reflect and say short prayers in assemblies and enjoy singing accompanied by 'signing' the words. Consequently, pupils' personal development is good.

The good leadership of the principal provides a strong drive and ambition to raise standards and improve the work of the school. That ambition is supported well by staff and the newly created senior leadership team. Through robust self-evaluation, senior leaders, in a short space of time, have gained an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Actions to improve teaching and increase accountability, such as a new procedure for tracking pupils' progress, have been put in place. The action includes using expertise across the federation also to share good practice in teaching. However, the initiatives have not had time to be evaluated accurately for their full effect on raising attainment and in ensuring all groups of pupils quicken the rate at which they learn, especially in writing and mathematics. Therefore, based on the outcomes reached to date, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

Nonetheless, initiatives such as professional training and the sharing of ideas between staff and across the federation are beginning to improve the quality of teaching. There are pockets of teaching across the school that are no more than satisfactory. That is because, in some lessons, teachers talk too much before introducing activities that enable pupils to learn for themselves. Generally, teachers plan lessons well to meet the needs of different groups. Girls are fully involved. Pupils with hearing impairments are supported very well throughout the school. They take a full and active part in all lessons.

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All groups of pupils, including girls, those known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress overall, especially in writing and mathematics. However, progress across the school is inconsistent, reflecting some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Pupils are taught effectively to read and this is a strength of the school – hence progress in reading is good. Attainment throughout and by the end of Key Stage 2 has fluctuated over time, being more consistent in English than mathematics. The pupils with hearing impairments make good progress and overcome learning difficulties to attain in line with other pupils, especially in reading. That is due to the hearing-impaired resource base being well led, with effective provision for these pupils in lessons.

Children get off to a satisfactory start in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the school. Methods to assess and track children's progress are not precise enough. Consequently, teachers miss opportunities to plan challenging activities for all children.

Up to 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment across Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics by:
 - increasing the pace of learning through planning activities that involve pupils fully in all lessons
 - increasing the rate at which pupils make progress in mathematics and writing by ensuring that all teaching is consistently good or better.
- Ensure that senior leaders monitor pupils' progress rigorously through the revised tracking procedure, to make sure all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make at least consistently good progress.
- Improve assessment procedures in the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure that planning is rigorous in providing challenging activities for all children.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils from all ethnic heritages are equally keen to learn and generally enjoy their lessons. That was seen in a lesson where pupils were learning about forces through making boats from tin foil and then counting the number of coins it took to sink boats of different sizes. The practical activity allowed pupils to develop their understanding of the need for fair testing and enabled them to learn from each

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other. Consequently, they made good progress. In another lesson, pupils were making good progress through developing their mental mathematical skills by playing bingo based on the multiplication of numbers. These types of activities allowed pupils to be involved in their learning. In some lessons, the pace of learning slowed because pupils spent too much time listening to teachers. As a result, the rate at which pupils learn is inconsistent, especially throughout Key Stage 2.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge levels below and often well below those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress overall and enter Year 1 with standards below those typical nationally. Progress throughout Key Stage 1 is generally good and attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 2. Satisfactory progress throughout Key Stage 2 means that attainment by the end of Year 6 is also broadly average. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with speech and language difficulties, make satisfactory progress overall also. However, hearing-impaired pupils make good progress, due to the good support they receive from both the additionally resourced staff and other adults in the school. For example, staff are particularly effective in supporting hearing-impaired pupils to develop good reading skills, through helping them articulate sounds.

Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of being healthy. They enjoy and participate willingly in the wide range of sporting activities that are on offer, both during and after school. While most have healthy snacks and drink water at break times, there are a few pupils who do not use their understanding in their choice of lunch box contents. Behaviour is good, even when pupils are passive in lessons. That is because of their good personal development and positive attitudes to learning. Pupils cooperate well and are friendly and polite to each other and adults and visitors to the school. Given their good personal development and average attainment, pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their next stage of education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2

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

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The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are well planned and resourced, although there is inconsistent use of information and communication technology, such as interactive whiteboards. There are elements of good teaching that are consistent, such as sharing with pupils what they are expected to learn in lessons. There is good teaching when pupils are fully involved in lessons, but practice is inconsistent. Lessons that had lengthy explanations or unnecessary closed questioning by teachers led to a minority of pupils losing interest and missed opportunities for pupils to learn for themselves. Marking is generally good and pupils welcome the supportive comments that teachers put in their books and, sometimes, pupils are encouraged to respond. Teaching assistants are used well to support individuals and groups of pupils, although, occasionally, these staff are passive during the introduction to lessons.

The school is in the process of reviewing the curriculum, for example in planning and implementing a whole-school approach to the teaching of basic number skills. It is particularly effective in teaching pupils to read. That is due in part to individual and groups of pupils being supported in their reading by teaching assistants. There is a good range of enrichment activities, such as trips, residential visits and sporting opportunities, that adds to pupils' enjoyment and self-confidence. They have been recognised in national awards. Also, there are musical opportunities, such as learning to play an instrument and singing in the choir – a particular favourite with pupils, including those with hearing impairments.

The school has a strong focus on pastoral care. There is good guidance to ensure pupils are well prepared for changes in their education, for example in moving to secondary school. There are good links with outside agencies, such as behaviour support services, that are used well to support potentially vulnerable pupils. The school has a very inclusive nature, with all staff and pupils learning how to communicate by 'signing'. Due to the strong links with speech and language services and the caring ethos of the school, hearing-impaired pupils are well supported. The school is working effectively with parents and carers to raise attendance. It is improving, but remains average overall because, despite the school's considerable efforts to persuade all to attend regularly, a few have yet to be convinced of the benefits of doing so.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The principal has instilled high expectations and a determined drive for improvement. That ambition is shared by staff and the governing body. The governing body is not only supportive, but also effective in bringing about change through challenging the school over its performance. It has used its links within the federation successfully to embed and provide stable leadership and management for the school. Initiatives to raise attainment and increase the rate of learning in lessons have begun, but have not had sufficient time to show the full benefits for pupils. The establishment of a new senior leadership team, the use of expertise across the federation, the reorganisation of teaching staff and a strong focus on pupils' learning are beginning to have impact. For example, more good teaching is taking place.

There are positive relationships with parents and carers. A comment in the questionnaire summed up most responses. 'The staff have positive relationships with the children and parents and carers and will do anything to help the children.' The school is committed to equality of opportunity. However, that aspect of the school's work is not above satisfactory because there is inconsistency in the progress made by different groups of pupils, especially when comparing those with other special educational needs and/or disabilities and hearing-impaired pupils.

Procedures to safeguard pupils are thorough and robust. The very large majority of responses from the parents' and carers' questionnaires agreed that the school was a safe place for the children. Staff are appropriately trained in child protection procedures and understand their roles and responsibilities fully. All staff are checked robustly to ensure they are suitable to work in school. Members of the governing body have had safer recruitment training to highlight the importance of safeguarding pupils when appointing new staff.

The school promotes community cohesion well. It has good links with local schools, especially in the federation, abroad in Zambia and Tanzania, and is developing further links with another school nationally. That results in pupils having positive attitudes towards each other, irrespective of cultural heritage. Consequently, they play together happily and get on well with each other.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make satisfactory progress overall in their learning. Assessments, including those from the nursery setting in the children's centre, indicate that some children make good progress, especially in their social and emotional development. Where children make satisfactory progress, this is because opportunities to assess their learning rigorously are missed. Therefore, subsequent planning does not always provide activities that challenge individual children fully. There are good arrangements to ensure children's welfare and personal development. Consequently, children feel safe in a pleasant learning environment. They behave well, share and cooperate as well as developing a sense of independence. Children have a good understanding of playing with an awareness of others and the importance of using equipment safely, such as scissors. They have fruit at playtimes and regularly wash their hands after activities to give them a good start in their understanding of how to keep healthy. There is a reasonable balance between teacher-led activities and those chosen by children. There are occasions when children are left for too long without adult intervention and opportunities are missed to increase learning at a good pace. Leadership and management are satisfactory, but improving. Due to new leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the monitoring of teaching has not yet taken place. Effective self-evaluation has identified the priorities of improving children's progress in their communication, language and literacy skills and provision in the outdoor learning area. Also, links with the nursery provision in the children's centre are being developed further to ensure continuity and progression in children's learning.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

The large majority of parents and carers feels that their children enjoy school and is happy with their overall experience there. A few think that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Evidence from the inspection found that pupils' behaviour was good, both in lessons and, generally, around the school. Also, inspectors noted the school's effective procedures to deal with unacceptable behaviour when necessary.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

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

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 114 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 450 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	69	61	40	35	5	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	75	66	35	30	3	3	1	1
The school informs me about my child’s progress	51	45	55	48	6	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	41	61	53	5	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	44	39	65	57	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	72	63	38	33	4	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	54	47	51	45	5	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	47	41	52	47	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	59	52	47	41	4	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	53	47	49	43	11	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	57	50	49	43	5	4	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	63	55	41	36	6	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	68	60	42	37	4	3	0	0

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

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

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

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

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



19 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bentley West Primary School Additionally Resourced for Hearing Impaired, Bentley, Walsall WS2 0EQ.

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. All the inspectors enjoyed meeting you and watching you work and play in school. The school gives you a satisfactory standard of education and all the staff work hard and care for you well. By the time you leave, most of you reach standards that are similar to the average found in primary schools. Here are some of the other good things that we found out about your school.

- You enjoy school and like being with your friends.
- You are keen to learn and to do your best. You make satisfactory progress overall, but do well with your reading.
- You behave well and treat each other with respect, and are always willing to help around school.
- You enjoy taking part in the activities that the school has to offer, especially sport.
- You are always willing to help other people in the community through supporting a number of charities.

We have asked the Principal and other adults to do the following things to improve your school.

Raise the standards you reach by the end of Year 6 by:

- ensuring you are always fully involved in activities in lessons
- ensuring that all the teaching is good, so that you increase the progress you make in writing and mathematics
- ensuring senior teachers follow your progress carefully, so that everyone makes equally good progress
- ensuring that teachers in the Nursery and Reception classes check more carefully on children's learning, so that they make good progress.

All of you can help, too, by continuing to work hard and supporting each other and your teachers.

Yours sincerely
James Henry (on behalf of the inspection team)

Lead inspector

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