

Biggin Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	137244
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	398175
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2012
Lead inspector	Clive Dunn

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Melanie Brown
Headteacher	David Payne
Date of previous school inspection	February 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Clive Dunn	Additional inspector
Peter Hare	Additional inspector
Clementina Ogunsanwo	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 30 lessons taught by 16 teachers, spending approximately 15 hours evaluating teaching and learning. Inspectors held discussions with pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of the school's records and policy documents, teachers' planning, pupils' work, and questionnaires returned by staff, pupils and 177 parents and carers.

Information about the school

This school is much larger than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. From May 2009 to September 2010 the school was without a substantive deputy headteacher. In the last two years a deputy headteacher and, more recently, leaders for English and mathematics have been appointed. The school converted to academy status in 2011. The previous school inspection of February 2009 was the final inspection of the predecessor school.

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	4
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	4

Key findings

- In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the effectiveness of leadership and management in securing essential improvements since the inspection of the predecessor school in February 2009, including better quality teaching to raise achievement so that it is consistently good or better.
- The school provides an acceptable standard of education, but its overall effectiveness is not satisfactory because leaders and managers are not improving aspects of its work quickly enough. Although the school has made some progress in addressing the recommendations made in the last inspection report of the predecessor school, the improvements are patchy and have not had sufficient impact on raising pupils' overall outcomes. Significant elements of these recommendations remain the same as before, reflecting an inadequate capacity to improve.
- Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In the rest of the school, pupils' progress and achievement are satisfactory in reading, writing and mathematics. Pockets of quicker progress exist, and are increasingly consistent in writing, but are too variable overall.
- Teaching is satisfactory. There is some good teaching, resulting in the pockets of better progress seen, but overall its quality is too variable and the pace of learning is sometimes too slow. Teaching is not always matched closely enough to the differing needs of pupils and marking is of inconsistent quality.
- Behaviour has declined since the previous inspection of the predecessor school when it was judged to be good. While questionnaires show generally positive

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views of behaviour, a small but significant proportion of pupils, staff, parents and carers raised concerns. Where behaviour in lessons is no better than satisfactory, this often links to weaknesses in teaching that result in low-level disruption to learning for a few pupils. Leaders have recently introduced more robust systems for tracking and improving pupils' behaviour, but these are at an early stage of development.

- Leaders' management of performance has been ineffective in raising the overall quality of teaching and achievement. The school's evaluations of its own performance are too generous. Monitoring systems, including those of the governing body, lack rigour. Leaders at all levels are not involved enough in directly observing the quality of teaching and learning in lessons to support improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By September 2012, improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels in accelerating the pace of improvement by:
 - rigorously monitoring and evaluating achievement and teaching to secure greater consistency of good practice
 - involving all key leaders in directly observing the quality of teaching and learning in lessons
 - enabling staff to learn from best practice in other schools.
- By January 2013, improve the quality of teaching and achievement to good, focusing particularly on reading and mathematics, by:
 - implementing effective lesson planning formats that promote good practice
 - ensuring teaching and tasks closely match the needs of all pupils
 - conducting lessons at a sufficiently brisk pace to lift pupils' achievement
 - embedding consistent and effective systems for setting and reviewing pupils' 'next-step' targets
 - using marking frequently to show pupils how to improve their work
 - increasing the rigour of teaching letters and sounds (phonics).
- Embed robust and consistent systems for analysing and improving pupils' behaviour and communication these clearly to pupils, staff, parents and carers.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children's starting points on entry to school are in line with those typically expected for their age. Through purposeful and productive activity, children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage in all areas of learning. Across the rest of the school, the achievement of both boys and girls is satisfactory. Although pupils' attainment

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when they start Year 1 has risen, it is too early to see its impact on improved performance overall at the end of Key Stage 1. The views of parents and carers about their children's progress are positive. Pockets of good progress exist but are inconsistent. Although there are indications of rising standards within different year groups, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 remains broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection of the predecessor school and shows that a trend of improvement has not been sustained.

Pupils respond positively to opportunities to contribute to discussions or work collaboratively, which support and occasionally enhance their learning. Sometimes tasks last too long and pupils become less purposeful, so the pace of learning slows. By Year 6, pupils demonstrate resilience, as seen when tackling challenging mathematics problems. Pupils use mathematical and scientific vocabulary accurately as a result of teachers' focus on this. They apply themselves steadily to tasks, but when motivated by a task with the right degree of challenge, they work at a quicker pace. Pupils develop sound strategies for learning independently. Typical examples range from pupils in Year 1 using flashcards to help them spell key words correctly, to pupils in Year 5 using a Thesaurus to improve their writing. At other times, pupils waste valuable learning time waiting for adult help.

Pupils' progress in writing is accelerating more consistently than in reading and mathematics. They build quickly on their early writing and mark-making skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Elsewhere, pupils know their 'next-step' writing targets well, but do not always realise how they can apply them in other subjects, for example in religious education. Pupils have positive attitudes to reading, although the school has correctly identified that their knowledge of phonics is not sufficiently secure to promote faster progress. Attainment in reading by the end of Key Stage 1 is broadly average.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. Tasks do not always match their needs well enough to support consistently good progress. At these times, they are too reliant on adult support to keep pace with their peers.

Quality of teaching

Pupils' work and progress indicate that teaching over time is satisfactory. Parents and carers believe their children are taught well. Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Positive interactions with adults make learning meaningful for children as they select their own activities. There is some good teaching in the rest of the school, but overall its quality remains too variable. Teachers do not consistently match teaching and activities to the needs of different groups closely enough to secure better than satisfactory progress. A similar finding was presented at the last inspection of the predecessor school, although the mismatch of work to ability no longer relates specifically to higher-attaining pupils. For example, in one mathematics lesson in Year 6, the high level of challenge for the higher attainers promoted good achievement, while other pupils in the class struggled to make as

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much progress. Conversely, in a literacy lesson in Year 1, pupils with special educational needs made better progress than their peers because of the effective support of the teaching assistant. Constant reinforcement of the key learning point about using 'connectives' to join simple sentences ensured they worked accurately and at a good pace. The format of lesson plans varies across the school and does not always promote brisk, purposeful teaching that fully meets the learning needs of different groups. Lessons do not always support faster progress because the pace of teachers' input slows or pupils spend too long on particular tasks.

Teachers regularly include activities in lessons to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They use effective questioning to develop pupils' thinking. Pupils are encouraged to form and express opinions, for example in response to a literary text. Teaching assistants' support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is variable. They are often proactive and well deployed when pupils work on group or independent tasks. However, during whole-class input, they sometimes have a limited impact on learning. The quality of marking remains variable. Teachers show pupils how to improve their work more consistently in writing, but do so far less in mathematics. Not all pupils have the opportunity to respond to teachers' marking, so its potential for impact is sometimes lost. Leaders have very recently made adjustments to systems for setting 'next-step' targets in mathematics, having rightly identified deficiencies in the previous system. These have yet to make an impact. Guided-reading sessions have clear learning intentions focused on developing key skills, such as research in Year 5. However, independent reading tasks that pupils complete in these sessions are not always sufficiently purposeful or stimulating to secure good progress.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Although leaders evaluate that behaviour is good, as it was in the last inspection of the predecessor school, inspection evidence indicates that it is satisfactory. Although never less than satisfactory, behaviour during the inspection was variable. Lessons typically flow without disruption to the whole class. However, when pupils are not appropriately challenged, their concentration wanes. Although it is a little boisterous at times, behaviour in the corridors and around the school is satisfactory and the school provides a safe, orderly environment.

The mixed views of parents and carers, pupils and staff indicate inconsistencies in typical behaviour over time. While most parents and carers express positive views about behaviour, it was the most frequent theme of their written concerns. Nearly a third of the staff who completed a questionnaire did not agree that behaviour was good. A similar proportion of pupils feel that behaviour is good only sometimes, with just one in ten saying it is good all of the time. Leaders have recently introduced a new system for tracking incidents of poor behaviour, but it has not been in place long enough for it to be used to identify and tackle any problems quickly.

Pupils say they feel safe at school and understand the dangers of different types of bullying, such as verbal or cyber-bullying. They know how to keep themselves safe,

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including when using new technologies. A small proportion raise concerns that the school does not always deal effectively with bullying, echoed by a very few parents and carers. The school's records show that concerns are taken seriously, although leaders recognise that more should be done to communicate the actions they take to those affected or involved.

Leadership and management

Improvements since the last inspection are fragile because the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement remain too variable across the school. Leaders' views of pupils' performance are too generous. The tackling of key recommendations from the last inspection of the predecessor school has been too slow to have lifted pupils' overall achievement substantially. This shows that the capacity for further improvement is insufficient because leaders have been ineffective in securing essential improvements since that inspection. Leaders are, however, able to demonstrate progress in a few areas. Teaching and children's achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage have risen from satisfactory to good. A rising trend in attendance is emerging, with current figures just above the national average. The proportions of pupils reaching the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen, and are broadly in line with the national average in English, and just above average in mathematics..

The governing body questions school leaders about the school's performance, but accepts their assertions and explanations too readily. Monitoring by senior leaders and the governing body lacks rigour, including of safeguarding arrangements, although these meet statutory requirements. The professional development of staff and the management of their performance have had a positive impact in some areas but have not raised the overall quality of teaching. In the inspection questionnaire, over a third of staff consider that the school does not make appropriate provision for their professional development. Leaders have correctly identified the need for further training to ensure rigorous teaching of phonics. This is planned, but has not yet taken place. The school is rightly developing links with other academies locally to support school improvement, including learning from good practice elsewhere.

Leaders take satisfactory steps to promote equality of opportunity between different groups of pupils, including closing the gap between boys and girls, and to tackle discrimination. The broad and balanced curriculum provides satisfactory opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Cross-curricular topics enable pupils to make links in learning and apply basic skills in all subjects to prepare them adequately for the next stage of their education. Pupils' exceptional singing in assembly is uplifting, and the school choir has an excellent reputation in the community.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.

14 May 2011

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Biggin Hill Primary School, Westerham, TN16 3LY

Thank you for welcoming us when we came to visit your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing how you are getting on. We particularly enjoyed hearing your exceptional singing. Thank you to those of you who talked to us, read to us, or answered our questionnaire. You told us that you enjoy school and feel safe while you are there. You also told us that you think your school helps you do as well as you can. Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education, but it is not improving quickly enough because those running it have not taken firm enough action to improve teaching and your attainment. For this reason, we have given your school a 'notice to improve'. This means that inspectors will visit the school again to check how well things are improving. Here are some of the things we found out.

- Children get off to a good start and achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- In the rest of the school, while there are pockets of good progress, you make satisfactory progress overall to reach the levels expected for your age. This is because teaching is satisfactory overall, although it has some strengths.
- You were not all certain that behaviour is as good as it could be. Some of the adults in school, parents and carers share your concerns. We judge your behaviour to be satisfactory.

We have asked senior staff and governors to do the following things to help your school improve.

- Check very carefully that the quality of teaching is good enough to lift your achievement and give teachers a chance to learn good things from other schools so as to improve their own teaching.
- Make sure that lessons are not too easy or too hard and flow at a good pace, and that teachers' marking and regular 'next-step' targets show you how to improve.
- Make sure that staff manage your behaviour consistently and effectively and that everyone understands how the school is promoting good behaviour.

You can all help by always trying to behave well and doing your very best in lessons.

Yours sincerely

Clive Dunn
Lead inspector

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