

Birchen Coppice Primary School

Woodbury Road, Kidderminster, DY11 7JJ

Inspection dates 12–13 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Despite the fact that leaders and managers have successfully raised the quality of teaching this is not yet good enough to lead to consistently strong progress.
- Some activities teachers give to pupils in whole class lessons are too hard or too easy – this means that pupils do not always achieve as much as they could.
- Staff do not always realise quickly enough when pupils find activities too difficult or misunderstand tasks – so they do not immediately change what the pupils are doing or provide additional support quickly enough.
- Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to practice and use mathematics in other subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- Effective, imaginative leadership has improved the school greatly, including behaviour, the environment for learning, attendance, achievement and teaching.
- A range of special programmes and small groups successfully provide effective support for those who need help.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress in all areas of learning.
- Pupils enjoy school. They feel safe because they know 'teachers are great and help us with anything'.
- Staff, pupils, parents and carers know the behaviour policy and procedures well. Their consistent use leads to the school's calm atmosphere and pupils' good behaviour.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons, taught by 14 teachers. Five observations were joint visits with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the Chair and vice chair of the Governing Body, school senior and middle managers and the local authority's school improvement advisor.
- Inspectors received the views of parents and carers through seven responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), a meeting with nine parents and carers, informal discussions at the beginning of the day and an email.
- Inspectors received the views of staff through 21 responses to the inspection questionnaire and discussions with teaching, support, administrative and ancillary staff. They received the views of pupils through both informal and pre-arranged discussions.
- They observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including the school's data on pupils' current progress, leaders' reports of lesson observation, the school's improvement plan, planning and monitoring documents, documents relating to safeguarding and records relating to behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Jo Curd, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Mary Hughes

Additional inspector

Edgar Hastings

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Birchen Coppice Primary School is a similar size to most other primary schools.
- It moved into new purpose-built accommodation, in the heart of a large housing estate, in November 2010.
- Almost all pupils speak English as their first language and are of White British heritage.
- At over 60 per cent, the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (money given to schools by the government), is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at the level of school action is broadly in line with the national average.
- At almost 25 per cent the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with statements is much higher than the national average.
- The majority of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have speech, language and communication difficulties. Most of the pupils have circumstances which may make them vulnerable. About five per cent of pupils have significantly challenging behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils who leave or join the school at times other than the start of the Reception Class or end of Year 6 is higher than in most other schools, particularly in the latter years of the school.
- The school currently runs three 'learning support' classes, for pupils of different ages and with different needs and a nurture group for pupils with emotional, behavioural and or learning difficulties.
- The school runs a short breakfast club before school each day.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress for Year 6 tests in 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teacher's use of assessments to match work to pupils' needs so that activities are not too easy or too hard.
- Ensure that staff quickly identify when pupils do not understand tasks so that they support them more rapidly, ensure pupils know how to improve and raise rates of progress.
- Increase the opportunities pupils have to use and practice mathematics in a range of other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The vast majority of children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage or in later years with knowledge, skills and understanding far lower than expected for their age.
- Despite good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, these extremely low starting points mean that attainment at the end of the Reception Year remains much lower than the national average.
- Achievement higher up the school requires improvement. It is not good because inconsistencies in teaching mean that progress in some classes is not always as good as it could be. Achievement in mathematics is rising but lags behind that of English.
- Though Year 6 attainment has been low, it is generally rising. A dip in 2011 was partly because this was a year group with a particularly high proportion of pupils who had special educational needs. Unconfirmed results for 2012 and school records of attainment for current pupils show standards to be higher than any in recent years.
- Some pupils from all groups make good progress, particularly in reading, but this varies between classes and requires improvement overall. Although no groups are specifically disadvantaged, none are achieving quite as well as they could. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in the learning support units and nurture group generally make good progress due to high staff ratio, very consistent approaches and effective support. Speech, language and communication needs are met effectively. This is enabling them to close the gap on what others achieve.
- Pupils with disabilities and other special educational needs, who are not in the units or nurture group, make good progress through intervention support. Work in lessons is sometimes slightly too difficult however, slightly slowing their progress overall.
- Pupils are proud of their achievements and those of others. This contributes well to good self-esteem and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents and carers contacted during the inspection are very positive about their children's achievements and are grateful for the work the school is doing.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Leaders' frequent, accurate monitoring, inspection observations and scrutiny of books show that teaching varies from class to class and requires improvement in order to ensure consistently good progress over time.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children enjoy and benefit from a wide range of attractive accessible resources promoting all areas of learning indoors and outside. Staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage interact with children well.
- Pupils, particularly those in the learning support units and nurture groups, benefit from a very practical curriculum such as gardening, especially in the afternoons. This contributes well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- Marking is up to date and assessments of learning are frequent and detailed. Teachers do not always make sufficiently good use of these assessments to match work closely to pupils' abilities.
- Although teachers vary tasks depending on pupils needs this match is not always sufficiently refined. In most classes a few pupils found activities too easy or difficult and teachers did not always identify this quickly enough. In lessons pupils do not always know how to improve or develop their work.
- Staff share good practice and support each other. The effective skills of teaching assistants and their sensitive approach are used well to support learning and behaviour. However, like teachers, they do not always identify misunderstandings quickly enough.
- Information and communication technology, such as computers, is used well. For example, some of the younger pupils enjoyed games that helped them remember and use the names and sounds of letters in reading and writing. In other classes computers were used to enable pupils with physical difficulties to write more easily.
- Pupils have good opportunities to develop skills in English across a range of subjects, for example speaking and listening is well established and pupils often read. Opportunities for them to use and apply mathematical skills are more limited. This is one reason that progress in mathematics is still slower than in English.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Observations, scrutiny of behaviour logs, discussions with pupils, staff, parents and carers indicate that pupils behave well in and out of class. Pupils work hard. Most are considerate and supportive of each other and quickly do as staff ask.
- Pupil premium funding is used to make sure there is a high ratio of staff to pupils. Effective supportive relationships throughout the school successfully motivate pupils' learning and behaviour.
- Behaviour management is excellent. Staff are well trained and use clear concise procedures quickly, calmly and consistently. Consequently pupils feel safe and despite occasional volatile behaviour, disruptions are minimal.
- Pupils who have behavioural needs are supported well to develop their understanding and manage their actions. For example they can go to the behaviour recovery room where they are helped by staff to decide how they can 'put things right' and improve in future.
- Procedures such as these have successfully reduced exclusions. These are now rare. Parents and carers report that these strategies also help them to manage and improve behaviour at home.
- Pupils with the most challenging behaviour and/or learning difficulties are supported well in the schools learning support units and nurture group. These pupils are also flexibly integrated into year group classes, and this is successful.
- Pupils enjoy school and the breakfast club. Attendance of all groups has risen and is now

broadly in line with the national average.

- Pupils have confidence in staff and enjoy good relationships with them and with each other. The school is highly cohesive. New arrivals are helped to settle well.
- There is little bullying of any kind. Pupils are confident that if this arises it is dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Pupils are taught to respect a wide range of others, including themselves. For example in an effective assembly on respect they learned about paralympians and looked into a box to see someone they should have deep respect and care for. The box contained a mirror
- This work on behaviour, respect and self-esteem successfully fosters pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It also serves to promote equality, combat discrimination and raise the aspirations of all.

The leadership and management

are good

- The leadership of the headteacher and deputy head teacher is having a strong impact on improvement in the school. They are respected and appreciated by pupils, parents, carers, staff, governors and the local authority. The local authority has provided effective support for school improvement.
- Improvements under the current leadership are evident and secure. These indicate that capacity to sustain improvement is good. They have successfully recruited and trained other leaders and managers and effectively delegate areas of work to them. Teamwork is strong.
- A range of leaders and managers have improved the quality of teaching through frequent accurate well focussed lesson observations and learning walks, even though teaching is not yet consistently good.
- Leaders monitor the performance of staff and pupils' achievement diligently and frequently. They quickly identify barriers and put a range of interventions in place.
- The gap between the attainment of pupils here and the national average is closing. The school is driving equality even though pupils, from all groups, are not yet achieving quite as well as they could.
- Pupil premium funding is used wisely and effectively on a range of intervention schemes and additional staff. The effectiveness of the intervention schemes is carefully monitored to ensure these are improving progress and raising attainment.
- **The governance of the school:** is astute, experienced and challenging.
 - Members of the governing body support leaders and hold them to account for provision and pupil's outcomes.
 - Governors meet regularly with school leaders, other agencies and the local authority.
- Partnerships with other agencies are strong and effective. Social workers, police officers and housing officers are all based on the school site.

- Despite many challenges staff morale is high. One member of the support staff reported the views of most when they said 'I am proud to be a member of a wonderfully committed team of professionals who constantly strive to meet the many needs of pupils here'.
 - Staff work extremely hard to reach and engage all parents and carers. The proportion actively engaged with the school is growing. The school provides a range of courses and workshops such as popular cooking classes for parents or carers and their children. Staff are extremely proactive and flexible about meeting all parents and carers regularly.
 - A growing number of parents and carers are positive about the school. One reported the views of many when she said that she "could not speak highly enough of the school and all the help and guidance they have given our family'.
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What inspection judgements mean

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

School details

Unique reference number	135045
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	402667

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	260
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicky Gale
Headteacher	Liane Billingsley
Date of previous school inspection	6 July 2011
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