

# King Charles Primary School

Wilkes Avenue, Bentley, Walsall, WS2 0JN

**Inspection dates** 11–12 September 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Teaching across the school is not yet of sufficient quality to ensure that pupils reach nationally expected levels of attainment by the end of Year 6.
- Recent improvements in monitoring systems introduced by the principal and acting head of school are not yet fully established in the school's work.
- In writing, progress is hampered by weak presentational skills.
- While leaders' evaluation of the school's current overall effectiveness is mainly accurate, some aspects of the work that leaders, including members of the governing body, undertake are not sufficiently developed to drive school improvement quickly.
- Attendance, despite recent improvements, remains low.

### The school has the following strengths

- The principal and the acting head of school are committed to raising pupils' achievement and are clear about how to do so.
- There is secure evidence of recent improvements in pupils' achievement across the school.
- The new senior leadership team has quickly gained the confidence of staff.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved substantially over the last year. Pupils work in an attractive, orderly environment. They get on well with each other and feel safe in school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons taught by 12 teachers. Three of these lessons were joint observations with the principal and/or the acting head of school. In addition, the inspection team made a small number of other short visits to lessons to question pupils about their learning and to view written work undertaken last year. Samples of pupils' written work in Years 4 and 6 were analysed. An inspector listened to some Year 2 pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, members of the governing body and school staff, including senior and middle managers and a representative of the private company overseeing educational services for the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the four responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the 27 questionnaires completed by staff in forming their judgements.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of other documents. These included self-evaluation records, the school's own data on pupils' current progress, and policies, procedures and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

## Inspection team

Derek Aitken, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Rowena Green	Additional inspector
Sharona Semlali	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- King Charles is similar in size to most primary schools and the number of pupils on roll is increasing. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A few pupils come from Indian, African, Black Caribbean and other heritages, but very few pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English.
- Almost one half of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. These pupils' needs relate mainly to moderate learning difficulties.
- The school provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage through two part-time Nursery classes and two Reception classes.
- The school is part of the Bentley federation, consisting of two primary schools, including King Charles, and a children's centre. The children's centre provides a variety of care facilities, including before- and after-school clubs for local families. The federation is led by a principal who took up his post in May 2011. He assumed responsibility within the federation for the leadership of King Charles in April 2012. An acting head of school took up post in September 2012 to assist the principal in managing the school.
- Almost half the teaching staff have joined the profession within the last year.
- The school meets the current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' learning and progress.
- The school has Healthy Schools status.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and improve its impact on pupils' achievement by:
  - ensuring teachers make consistently good use of assessment information to plan lessons which consistently challenge all groups of pupils, especially the more able
  - ensuring teachers improve their questioning techniques and use of time to increase the pace of pupils' learning
  - making better use of pupils' targets to help pupils acquire greater self-confidence and enable them to take more responsibility for their learning.
- Improve pupils' writing skills by:
  - ensuring that all written work is neatly presented
  - ensuring that the new marking policy is consistently applied and responded to appropriately by pupils.
- Enhance the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
  - embedding the revised performance management system fully in the school's work to ensure good or better teaching is firmly established and to equip new staff with the skills to undertake leadership roles when the opportunities arise
  - sharpening monitoring systems to accelerate the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
  - building stronger partnerships with parents and carers and external specialists to support school self-evaluation and development.
- Ensure recent improvements in attendance are sustained and seek further ways of working effectively with families to raise attendance to meet the local authority target.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Children enter Nursery with levels of skills and knowledge which are well below national expectations. By the end of Reception levels are below expectations. At the end of Year 2 pupils' attainment is below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. By Year 6 attainment is broadly average at Level 4, but few pupils attain the higher Level 5, especially in writing. There are no significant differences in the achievement of different group of pupils, including pupils eligible for the pupil premium and those from Indian, African, Black Caribbean and other heritages.
- There are clear signs of rising achievement. Developing links with the children's centre, coupled with improvements to provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, are improving children's progress. This is providing pupils with a stronger base for tackling work in Key Stages 1 and 2 successfully. Attainment in Year 2 is rising, and previous underperformance in Key Stage 2 has been significantly reduced, enabling most pupils to make the progress expected nationally in English and mathematics.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is slowly improving. Useful links with history provide an exciting stimulus for the content of pupils' writing, but the overall quality of their writing is marred by careless presentation.
- While pupils understand key mathematical concepts, they sometimes do not recall their times tables accurately or recognise number patterns to apply their understanding confidently or correctly.
- Most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the progress expected of them. They make faster progress in lessons where their needs have been sharply identified by staff more used to working with them.
- Lower attaining pupils in Year 2 have some awareness of decoding techniques to help them work out the meanings of unfamiliar words. They tend, however, to stumble over key high frequency words which affects the accuracy of their reading and they do not consistently follow the text with their finger. Consequently, they sometimes miss out parts of the sentence.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- While there are some examples of good teaching, this is not yet a consistent feature of the school's work.
- Teachers sometimes do not make sharp use of assessment information or time to plan lessons to challenge all groups of pupils. While pupils are aware of the learning intention, success criteria and pupils' targets are infrequently referred to. Consequently, pupils are often not involved sufficiently in shaping their learning over time. Older pupils know the levels they are working at but do not have clear ideas about how they can improve.
- Teachers' questioning is sometimes not varied or probing enough to deepen pupils' understanding or to prepare more able pupils fully to undertake more demanding tasks.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make better progress in lessons when they are provided with visual prompts to enable them to think for themselves and work independently; sometimes teaching assistants do too much of their work for them.
- Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and manage them well. Most pupils are keen to answer the teachers' questions. They respond positively to opportunities to learn actively, for example in competitive games and through role play. Good use of visual resources was made in a Reception lesson to capture children's interest and enable children to group and compare bones and pens by size correctly.
- Topic work in history makes a secure contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, it enables them to provide thoughtful explanations of

the difficulties people face in wartime viewed from different perspectives.

- Teachers occasionally provide pupils with short, well-focused opportunities to reflect on their learning and improve their written or oral responses. This was successful in a Year 5 topic lesson where pupils spoke entertainingly about a day in the life of Henry VIII.
- Leaders have introduced a new marking policy. While some staff are using this well to raise expectations and to require pupils to respond to their helpful guidance, this is not yet common practice. Limited use is made of targets to support pupils' learning over time.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **require improvement**

- Pupils are friendly and polite. They behave well in public areas inside school. Nearly all pupils behave sensibly in the playground. They say that pupils of different backgrounds relate well to each other. Rewards are used sensibly to motivate them to behave responsibly.
- Older pupils report that behaviour has improved markedly. This is reflected in the sharp fall in exclusions over the last three years.
- Leaders have recently established more rigorous approaches to secure regular attendance, which historically has been low. While there is evidence of improvement, for example in a reduction of persistent absentees, the overall rate remains low.
- Nursery children at this early point in the school year are not yet fully accustomed to following routines for sensible behaviour. Additional adults do not always intervene effectively enough to ensure children comply quickly with instructions and requests.
- The responses to the questionnaires indicate no concerns regarding pupils' behaviour.
- Most pupils enjoy their learning and respond enthusiastically when given the opportunity to contribute fully to lessons. On a few occasions questioning is not sufficiently targeted to ensure that pupils who are seated further from the teacher sustain their concentration.
- Pupils' good attitudes are not fully capitalised on in lessons to encourage pupils to take more responsibility for their learning and to boost their self-confidence.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying and say that they have full confidence in the staff to deal effectively with the rare instances when it occurs.
- Pupils say they feel safe on the well maintained playground facilities and in the attractive, spacious interior areas.
- Pupils have a good awareness of strategies for staying safe, for example on the internet and on busy roads.
- Evidence from case studies indicates that the school has worked well with individual pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable to secure good improvements in their achievement and/or behaviour.

### **The leadership and management**

### **require improvement**

- The new principal has vision and drive. He is ably supported by the acting head of school. They have implemented some tighter monitoring systems to enable teachers to track the progress of pupils in their classes more securely and have strong expectations for pupils' achievement. This is reflected in recent improvements in pupils' progress.
- Senior leaders have a realistic understanding of the school's present overall effectiveness and have a sharp awareness of what needs to be done to improve pupils' achievement.
- The new senior leadership team is providing less experienced colleagues with firm guidance. It has established, within a relatively short period of time, the groundwork for a robust cycle of lesson observations. Leaders have provided colleagues with sharp, well argued, useful advice. This has started to improve classroom practice.
- The new performance management cycle is not firmly established in the school's work to

ensure full accountability. Targets are the same for all staff. Frequent changes in staffing at all levels in recent years have held back the school's capacity for continuous, steady improvement. Consequently, few staff outside the senior leadership team have developed the expertise to enable them to play an influential role in school improvement.

- The development plan identifies correct priorities, specifies clearly-defined monitoring activities and outlines clear success criteria. This plan, although seeking to establish full consistency of practice across all three providers in the federation, has not yet been refined by school leaders or the members of the governing body to reflect the particular circumstances in King Charles.
  - The curriculum meets the needs of pupils adequately, but is not sufficiently adapted to enable pupils to make a fast rate of progress. No formal surveys of pupils' or parents' views have been undertaken recently to inform curriculum development. The welfare of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has been closely monitored, but less emphasis has been placed on tracking their academic progress. Consequently, equal opportunities are only adequately promoted.
  - The local authority has provided some useful support with the moderation of assessments of pupils' work. The school has made limited use of its support and other providers in other areas of its work.
  - All statutory requirements relating to safeguarding are met.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Key members of the governing body are now gaining more first-hand information of the school to inform decision making and to increase the rigour of their work.
    - While the governing body has worked effectively to build partnerships across the federation, it, in common with the other school leaders, has been less successful in developing productive partnerships with parents and carers and other external specialists working independently, or on behalf of the local authority, to secure school improvement.
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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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104175
<b>Local authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	400690

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	252
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mike Lee
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rod Dickson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13–14 July 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01922 721368
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