

Bellfield Junior School

Vineyard Road, Northfield, Birmingham, B31 1PT

Inspection dates

16–17 October 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Since the last inspection, the headteacher and governors have successfully improved teaching and pupils' achievement, so that progress for all groups is consistently good.
- Good teaching, high expectations of what pupils can achieve and careful checking on how well they are doing have resulted in pupils' attainment in English and mathematics rising to above the national average at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Almost all teachers skilfully adapt work to take account of pupils' individual abilities and learning needs.
- The rich range of learning experiences provided by teachers really helps pupils to learn and inspire their enthusiasm and creativity. Pupils say they are 'learning lots' and love school. Such experiences help pupils gain understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural matters extremely well.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and sometimes exemplary because of the many ways in which staff help them to take responsibility for this and for their own learning; this means they are well prepared for the next steps in their education.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is not yet outstanding, because sometimes teachers are too quick to provide answers to their own questions so pupils are not expected to think more deeply about the subject. Occasionally, pupils have work that is too easy for some and marking is not always used well enough to help pupils to understand how to do even better.
- Governors are committed to improving the school, well informed and understand the school's strengths and priorities but are not yet fully confident in challenging the headteacher, staff and pupils to do even better.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, of which six were observed jointly with senior leaders. In addition, they made a number of short visits to other lessons, heard pupils read and looked at their work.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the School Improvement Partner, governors, local authority advisers and the school's staff, including senior leaders.
- Although there were too few responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to be recorded, inspectors talked with parents as they collected their children and considered the school's own survey of parents' views. They also analysed questionnaires completed by staff.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including: the school's self-evaluation and planning for improvement; the data the school keeps on pupils' current progress and achievement; records relating to behaviour and attendance and the school's safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Susan Lewis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Fatiha Maitland

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Bellfield Junior School is an average sized school of its type. The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is much higher than the national average, at over 50%.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is high, although the proportions supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are average.
- Although the large majority of pupils are White British with English as their first language, the proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who have English as an additional language are high compared with other schools.
- The school runs a breakfast club and a range of other after-school activities and clubs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently outstanding by:
 - ensuring that all pupils in every lesson have work that is never too easy for them so they achieve even more
 - encouraging pupils in every subject to think about and check how to sound out words and how to spell them
 - all teachers giving pupils sufficient time or clues to work out the answers to questions before giving the explanation themselves
 - making sure that marking always makes clear to pupils what is good about their work, how they could do even better and what the next steps in their learning should be.
- Make governors even more effective in holding the school to account by:
 - extending the training they have received on understanding the numerical data on pupils' progress and results, so they can question the headteacher and other leaders even more closely to account for the school's performance to improve it further.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils enter the school with skills and abilities that are usually slightly below average at the end of Key Stage 1. They are often significantly lower in writing standards and in their ability to sound out words. By the time they leave, pupils achieve at least as well as others of their age and, sometimes, better.
- All pupils including the disabled, those with special educational needs and those for whom the school receives additional funding (the pupil premium) achieve well. Those who are eligible for free school meals, for example, catch up and largely close any gaps in the standards achieved between themselves and other groups on entry because of the extra help they receive from staff and other out-of-class activities funded through this money. Consequently, over 90% of these pupils achieved the expected levels in mathematics and English at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2012.
- Pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language, make at least good progress from their starting points because of the ways in which the leaders check on how well every pupil is doing and take swift action if anyone's progress is slowing.
- A recent focus on speaking and listening supports all pupils and particularly those with special educational needs or who have English as an additional language. It is improving pupils' levels in all subjects. Pupils are helped to think through and express their ideas, which gives them the confidence to put them down in writing more effectively.
- Pupils make good progress in their reading and writing because of the many opportunities they have to practise these skills in different subjects as they plan out what they will research or design and record what they have found out. They make particularly good progress in science, being inspired by the experiments and investigations they carry out to always try their best.
- Although pupils know their targets and understand what they are meant to be learning in a lesson, they are not always clear about why something they have done is good or what they need to do to improve. This is because teachers' marking does not always point such things out or deal with basic errors, such as misspelling.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection and contributes greatly to pupils' better learning, progress and achievement. Teachers are quick to verbally praise the pupils' work and ideas and suggest improvements, although pupils are not always made aware of the next steps to take in their learning through teachers' marking of their work.
- Teachers know what they are trying to achieve with pupils and what the next steps in learning for each pupil are. Pupil-progress meetings enable them to discuss what each pupil needs to do to achieve even more, and how the staff can bring this about in their teaching or through providing extra programmes.
- Work is almost always set at the right level for individual pupils, and lessons run at a brisk pace and maintain pupils' interest in the learning. Pupils enjoy the learning and rise to the challenge, cheering each other when their team or table gets something right. Occasionally, a few pupils

have work that is too 'easy' for them – and say so – particularly when everyone has the same task to do when all are working together as a whole class.

- In a few lessons, opportunities are lost to accelerate pupils' skills in sounding out words and spelling more accurately because teachers do not get pupils to practise these skills enough when a word has been misspelt.
- All teachers and teaching assistants work hard to involve pupils in learning in lessons and aim to help them gain the ability to think and learn for themselves. Teachers give pupils many opportunities to talk with and learn from each other and promote very well their speaking and listening skills and also their social skills. Occasionally, teachers themselves talk too much or answer their own questions instead of giving pupils another clue to find the answer. This means they tell pupils something or read something to them that they could have called on pupils to read or work out for themselves.
- Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves are excellent. This makes a real contribution to pupils' learning because they listen, share ideas and try their best for their teachers and for each other.
- The extra funding to help particular pupils (the pupil premium) supports their learning well. Teachers give these pupils the opportunity to learn in small groups with practical experiences and extra resources with which to develop and apply their learning skills. This supports these pupils making good progress and really enjoying their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in classrooms and around the school. They are polite and courteous to each other and adults. Those from different social and ethnic backgrounds get on extremely well because the school promotes their interest in each other and each other's different cultures very well and celebrates each pupil as an individual.
- Pupils say that everyone likes and gets on with each other and that bullying does not exist in the school. If there were incidents they know their teachers would deal with them fairly. One said, 'They all listen to you and I know they will help me if I am worried.' Parents agree that behaviour is good at the school and that their children are very happy there.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying they might encounter now or later in life and of how to keep themselves safe because the school has a strong personal, social and health education programme that encourages them to think about such issues and how they might be dealt with.
- There are clear systems in place to record any poor behaviour and pupils are very clear as to what this amounts to and what the sanctions might be. Incidents are very rare and pupils who enter the school with behavioural, social and emotional needs are helped extremely well to manage these.
- Most pupils attend regularly and their attendance has improved since the previous inspection. Parents say their children love to come to school and they, themselves, are keen to find out what their children are learning because it is 'so interesting'.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, governors and senior leaders have worked effectively together and with staff to raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress since the last inspection so that pupils now achieve well and some even better.
- Staff at all levels are involved effectively in school improvement and are hugely proud of the strides it has made to improve. They understand what now needs to be done to take achievement and teaching quality further forward and are keen to do so as quickly as possible.
- Rigorous checking on how well pupils are doing and how good the teaching is are carefully linked to setting targets for staff to reach. Leaders carefully manage staff performance, and pay progression is closely linked to how effective staff are in helping pupils to achieve. Better teaching has also come from the helpful training opportunities that are provided for teachers and other staff.
- Changes in what is taught in subjects – the curriculum – excite pupils, parents and teachers and motivate pupils to learn. Pupils say they like the school because 'you learn lots' and teachers make it so interesting. They have many opportunities to actively practise all key skills – such as literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and speaking. This good practice helps to accelerate their progress so they catch up, when they may have been behind on entry to Year 3. The breakfast- and after-school clubs give pupils many opportunities to learn and to get on with others out of classroom situations, as well as being much appreciated by families.
- Leaders make the school a highly inclusive harmonious community in which all have equal opportunity to learn and to take part in all activities. This is because the leaders and staff know each individual so well and take account of their personal and learning needs and backgrounds. They ensure that the pupil premium helps targeted pupils catch up, making a real difference to the learning and confidence of pupils who may be disadvantaged by their circumstances.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well, as shown in pupils' ready interest in other cultures, understanding of each others' differing needs, keen sense of right and wrong and eagerness to help each other and 'make things better' in the wider world.
- The school is meticulous in securing the safety and well-being of pupils. Safeguarding procedures are all compliant with requirements and there are strong working relationships with other agencies and with parents and carers to ensure that pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, those who are disabled and those who have special educational needs have access to all the support and opportunities that they should.
- The local authority gives the school measured support based on its performance. Support has eased as the school has achieved such strong improvement.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors give their time, effort and expertise unstintingly to help the school's development. They have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and know how much it has improved since the last inspection. They have been trained to analyse data on pupils' progress and attainment and understand how well pupils are achieving and what further improvements are needed, but their training does not fully equip them to use this information to demand outstanding, rather than good, results from the school. However, they do check rigorously on the impact of the use of additional funding for particular pupils (the pupil premium) by scrutiny of the information describing these pupils' progress and attainment compared with

that of other pupils. Governors control the school's financial decisions closely, and help to decide priorities for how funds are spent. They check on teaching quality, through the information they get from the headteacher and other leaders and make sure that staff pay is justified by teaching performance and the results achieved.

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	103291
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	400604

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Samantha Dore
Headteacher	Tracey Cameron
Date of previous school inspection	23 November 2009
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