

Albert Bradbeer Primary

Turves Green, Northfield, Birmingham, B31 4RD

Inspection dates 31 October–1 November 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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- The pace of learning in writing and mathematics lessons is not fast enough to ensure good progress in all year groups.
- More pupils are achieving average standards but too few reach the higher levels in their work in writing and mathematics. This means that pupils of high ability could be doing better.
- The outside area in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not well planned to provide stimulating activities to develop children's skills, particularly their communication and writing skills.
- Writing and mathematics are not sufficiently promoted through other subjects.
- Subject leaders, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader and governors play only a limited role in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance. They are not sufficiently involved in raising achievement further.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and deputy provide strong leadership. They have brought stability to the school after several years of staffing turbulence. Importantly, they are making good progress in improving the quality of teaching.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They are respectful and cooperate well together. They feel safe in school.
- Pupils of all abilities make good progress in their reading. They read confidently and widely.
- The school's leaders have used additional funding effectively to boost the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals.
- Relationships with parents and carers are highly effective, and have helped improve pupils' attendance rates to average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 lessons or parts of lessons, some of which were joint observations with senior leaders. All class teachers were seen working with the pupils.
- Inspectors also heard pupils read from Years 2, 3, 4 and 5, attended an assembly, and undertook a scrutiny of pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils chosen at random, as well as members of the school council. Discussions were held with the headteacher and senior leaders, class teachers, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 16 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), letters from parents and carers, and the 27 questionnaires completed by staff in forming their judgements. An inspector spoke to several parents and carers on the playground.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of other documents. These included self-evaluation documents, the school's own data on pupils' progress, and policies, procedures and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Mary Hinds, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Fatiha Maitland

Additional Inspector

Alan Jarvis

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Albert Bradbeer is larger than most primary schools.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Over a third of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and those with parents in the armed forces. This is much higher than other schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' learning and progress.
- There have been significant staffing changes since the last inspection. The executive headteacher took over the leadership of the school in September 2012. Three new teachers were also appointed at the same time.
- The children's centre adjacent to the school is managed by the governing body, but is subject to a separate inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and increase pupils' rates of progress in writing and mathematics by:
 - making sure class teachers set work that is at the right level of challenge for all pupils, and especially the more able in writing and mathematics
 - regularly reviewing pupils' understanding in lessons so that the pace of learning is quickened for all groups
 - increasing the time pupils have to work by themselves or with others
 - systematically teaching mental calculation and number skills
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply and extend their writing and mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Improve children's learning experiences in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - using the outdoor area to provide creative and exciting opportunities for children to learn at a faster rate in all areas and especially in their communication and writing skills.
- Strengthen the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - middle leaders develop a clear understanding of pupils' performance in their areas of responsibility so that they can play a full role in driving improvement
 - governors play a greater part in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance so that they are able to support and challenge leaders more effectively.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children start school with levels of skills and knowledge that are lower than those expected for their age. Assessments show that more and more children are reaching the level expected of them by the end of the Reception Year. However, their language and literacy skills, including early writing skills remain weak because their learning is not enhanced and extended well enough beyond the classroom.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in 2012 was broadly average in Year 6. This was an improvement on previous years, when attainment was low. Pupils have a wide selection of books to read. They read regularly, and are confident and fluent readers. They are taught how to use their knowledge of the sounds that letters make to read difficult words.
- The proportion of pupils making and exceeding the progress expected of them in reading was similar to that made by pupils in most schools, including more-able pupils. This represents good achievement given pupils starting points. Although progress in writing and mathematics is slower than in reading, progress in these subjects in almost all year groups is getting better.
- Too few more-able pupils achieve the higher levels in writing and mathematics. Sometimes, all pupils complete the same activities in lessons meaning that the tasks are frequently too easy for the more able. They are not given work to make them think hard to speed up their progress.
- Teaching does not provide sufficient focus on developing pupils' mental and calculation skills in mathematics which often prevents them learning more complex concepts. For example, pupils struggle to work out fraction problems because many do not know multiplication and division facts.
- Although there were some good examples of pupils practising and extending their basic mathematical skills in real life situations and in other subjects, this is not always so in all year groups. Furthermore, pupils have limited opportunities complete longer pieces of writing in other subjects.
- There is little variation between the overall progress that different groups of learners make in both English and mathematics, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Their progress is comparable with similar pupils nationally. This is a result of well targeted teaching in small groups and on a one-to-one basis.
- The use of pupil premium funding has recently been reviewed to ensure that it is targeted to provide even better support. Funding is used to provide additional help on a one-to-one basis, as well as focused teaching in groups. Pupils have also benefited from new reading resources. This helps these pupils to make the same progress as their peers.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement although it is good and occasionally outstanding in some lessons. Improvements in the teaching of reading have raised attainment. The recent restructuring of teaching in Years 5 and 6, where pupils are grouped by ability in English and mathematics, is leading to better rates of progress in these classes.

- In other year groups, teaching does not always include work that matches pupils' widely-ranging abilities and needs. In a small minority of lessons, teachers sometimes plan for different abilities but often the work is either too easy or too difficult.
- In lessons which require improvement, teachers talk too much reducing the time pupils have to use and apply their skills and to extend their learning, either independently or with other pupils.
- The teaching of spelling is effectively organised and is beginning to result in pupils being more confident in their writing. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their creative writing skills across the curriculum. Likewise, pupils do not use and apply their mathematical skills in real life practical situations in other subjects.
- The school has identified weaknesses in pupils' mathematics skills, such as mental calculation and number skills. However, a systematic approach to improving teaching to remedy this has not yet been implemented.
- In better lessons, teachers plan activities that are lively, interesting and practical. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils enthusiastically investigated length and capacity. The teacher skilfully questioned the pupils to gauge their understanding and modified the activities to ensure that learning continued at a good rate. This is not a common feature in lessons which require improvement.
- Children are now making faster progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in their personal development. However, the outside area is not organised well enough to successfully build on what children learn in the classroom. There are too few opportunities for children to practise and extend their skills, particularly their communication and writing skills in exciting and different contexts.
- Marking is usually good and provides pupils with clear guidance on how to improve, chiefly in their writing. Pupils are increasingly being encouraged to assess their own progress because teachers identify key measures for success.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons. They have positive attitudes to their learning. Teachers manage behaviour very effectively and implement the new behaviour policy consistently. Pupils listen carefully and respond respectfully to adults and to each other. Almost all parents and carers who spoke with inspectors and who responded to the Parent View questionnaire stated that behaviour is good.
 - Those pupils who find school difficult to cope with are identified quickly. They have focused interventions in small nurture groups to address barriers to their learning as a result of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Work to raise pupils' self-esteem results in them gaining the confidence to learn effectively in class.
 - Break times and dinner times are harmonious. Pupils are well mannered and polite. They get on well with each other. Pupils of all ages play together co-operatively.
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- Children make good progress in their personal development in the Nursery and Reception classes. Adults provide effective role models for behaviour. Children listen to one another and work co-operatively together.
- Pupils state that bullying is rare. They understand the importance of letting an adult know if they feel unsafe. The school council has recently reviewed the school's bullying policy and everyone has signed the anti-bullying charter which is displayed in all classrooms. This reflects pupils' keen sense of accepting their responsibility for keeping the school a safe place to learn and play. They told inspectors that 'Everyone has the right to be happy and safe in our school'.
- Attendance has improved and is now average. The school has worked hard with parents and carers who ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The quality of leadership is variable across the school. The headteacher and the deputy provide very effective leadership. They are determined that all pupils will make rapid progress throughout the school, regardless of their ability or background. They have quickly established a forward-looking team and staff morale is high.
- The role of middle leaders, including subject leaders, requires improvement. Middle leaders have only recently been appointed to take responsibility for managing subjects and key stages. They have responded to their new roles with enthusiasm. They are not sufficiently involved in using all the information available to know what needs to be done to ensure that achievement in their areas of responsibility is improving rapidly enough in writing, mathematics and in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, including in teaching and learning. They are eager to begin a programme of checks to ascertain the training that will be needed to meet their demanding targets.
- There is a strong commitment to ensuring that all pupils do equally well and that none are disadvantaged. This is demonstrated in the work done to improve reading. The gap between those pupils eligible for the pupil premium and all pupils is also closing.
- The headteacher, together with the governors, has eradicated inadequate teaching. They are raising the profile of performance management. Along with governors, the headteacher will only consider requests for increases in salary where a teacher's classroom performance and contribution to whole-school improvement warrant it.
- Pupils have access to a good range of clubs, and they have regular opportunities to visit different places in order to support their learning. The school has recently extended this enrichment to parents and carers who join their children on visits to places of interest at the weekend. However, basic mathematical skills are not taught well enough. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise their writing and mathematics skills through other subjects.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through their roles as school councillors, topic work and through reflective assemblies.
- The local authority has supported the governing body in the appointment of the new

headteacher. Prior to this, it ensured some degree of stability in leadership of the school through a shared arrangement with the current headteacher who was previously the part-time headteacher of the school as well as being the headteacher of a local school. The local authority has also provided training for the governing body in its roles and responsibilities.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has an increasing understanding of how well the school is performing. However, its members are not sufficiently involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance independently. They rely too much on the senior leadership team for information. Governors are better informed about teachers' performance and the link between this and salary progression. They are increasingly able to ensure that the best teaching is suitably rewarded. Governors have worked well with the local authority to provide stability in leadership with the appointment of the headteacher recently. They are keen to offer further support and challenge. Governors have checked that pupil premium funding has resulted in those pupils it supports now making better progress. They ensure that the school's safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
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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	131759
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	406450

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community I
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	453
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lorraine Bird
Headteacher	Christine O'Malley
Date of previous school inspection	18 November 2010
Telephone number	0121 4642356
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