

Ley Hill Primary School

Rhayader Road, Northfield, Birmingham, B31 1TX

Inspection dates

8–9 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		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

- There is not enough good or better teaching for all pupils to do well.
- Pupils spend too long practicing a skill when they have mastered it, rather than moving on to learn something new.
- Teachers focus only on pupils with their hands up and do not routinely check that all pupils are paying attention and making progress.
- Teachers do not always encourage children in the nursery to speak, or correct inaccuracies in the speech of older pupils.
- Teachers do not always apply sanctions consistently or quickly enough to ensure good behaviour.
- Governors do not have a sufficiently detailed understanding of the school's performance in order to hold school leaders to account.

The school has the following strengths

- Teachers mark pupils' work very well, so pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve.
- Additional funding has been used well to successfully raise attendance and close the gap in performance between pupils eligible for free school meals and others.
- Pupils feel safe in school and have confidence in their teachers to deal with any problems.
- Good leadership from the headteacher is resulting in marked improvements in teaching, attendance and behaviour.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons. In addition, the inspection team made a number of other short visits to lessons, listened to pupils reading and analysed the work in their books.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and staff, including senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors met with parents and carers. There were five responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also considered the views expressed by parents and carers through the school's own surveys.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, exclusions and attendance, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

David Driscoll, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Richard Boswell

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most other primary schools.
- An average proportion of pupils are supported through school action.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or belong to other groups for whom the school receives additional income (the pupil premium) is high.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A new headteacher joined the school in April 2012 and a new deputy headteacher was appointed at the same time.
- The school shares its site with Little Owls Pre-school. This is privately managed and subject to a separate inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of lessons taught to a good or better quality by ensuring that teachers:
 - give pupils more demanding tasks as soon as they have mastered a skill
 - check the progress and engagement of all pupils and not just those with their hands up
 - consistently encourage children in the nursery to speak, and correct inaccuracies in the speech of pupils in other years.
- Ensure that pupils behave well at all times by applying the behaviour sanctions consistently and using them more quickly.
- Ensure that members of the governing body have a better understanding of how to measure the school's performance and use the results when holding senior leaders to account.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children join the Nursery with experiences and skills that are below the level expected for their age. They make steady progress in their first year but the development of their speaking is slower than other areas of their learning because they often work and play in silence, and are not given enough encouragement to talk.
- Progress is good in reading, writing and mathematics in the Reception class and Year 1, so pupils' standards improve to average by the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils' progress requires improvement in other year groups and standards remain average by the time they leave Year 6.
- The progress that pupils make is improving at each key stage as the quality of teaching is raised, although the improvement is slower in speaking and listening skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Standards of reading, writing and mathematics are improving faster than the national average. The most able pupils in Year 6 read demanding texts, such as *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, which not only encourage them to read more widely but also supports their spiritual and moral development.
- The key factor that stops pupils making good progress is the time they spend practicing a skill when they could be learning something new. This applies to pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs. In a mathematics lesson, for example, pupils were learning to calculate fractions. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, quickly grasped how to do this, but then spent too long doing lots of examples rather than going on to more difficult work.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals have not performed as well as others in recent years. They have not attended school often enough and so missed key lessons. The school's leaders have used the extra funding provided for such pupils to boost their attendance. This, in turn, has led to a marked improvement in their progress. It is now at least as good as other pupils in all years, and better in some, so there is very little difference in the standards that these pupils reach.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teachers plan initial tasks that are usually well matched to pupils' abilities. However, they do not result in pupils making good progress because teachers do not check how well all pupils are doing so that they can be moved on to more difficult work as soon as possible. Teachers often give pupils too many practice questions to complete rather than giving them something new to learn.
- When addressing the whole class, teachers usually only ask questions of those with their hands up. This means that other pupils know that they do not need to pay full attention as the teacher is not going to check how well they are listening. In a writing lesson in Year 3, for example, few boys were putting their hands up, this was because they had lost interest. In contrast, the teacher in a Year 1 mathematics lesson chose pupils at random to question to make sure all were listening. The teacher also had a set of lolly sticks, each with a pupil's name on and colour coded by ability, which the teacher used to check the understanding of more and less able pupils.
- Teachers do not always correct errors in pupils' speaking, such as when they say, 'It falled in the

river.' This means that pupils think that their way of speaking is correct and so repeat the errors in their writing. Teachers' accurate marking ensures that such written errors are corrected, but pupils often continue to make them when speaking.

- Marking is often very good. It identifies exactly what a pupil needs to do to improve. Time is set aside at the start of the next lesson for pupils to consider the teacher's comments and make their corrections, so all pupils are well focussed on improving their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils is not good because there is too much variation in pupils' attitudes to learning between classes. In some lessons, pupils' attention wanders when they become bored or have to listen too long instead of being active. In other lessons, they pay rapt attention to their teacher and a mention of their name is enough to regain their focus if they are distracted.
- A very few pupils do not do as they are told straight away. This invariably happens in classes where teachers are not using the school's discipline procedures. Instead of giving the pupils a warning straight away, the teachers in these classes repeat the instruction several times. This does not set a good example to others and limits pupils' understanding of right and wrong ways to behave and of how to show respect for others.
- The number of pupils excluded has been much higher than the national average in recent years. However, new behaviour policies and strategies have led to only one fixed-term exclusion since the arrival of the new headteacher. Many of the previously excluded pupils were among those known to be eligible for free school meals. The school's leaders have made good use of extra funding to teach such pupils how to manage their behaviour. As a result, they are now much better behaved and their progress has improved.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They have no concerns about bullying in school because they know that staff take their concerns seriously and act on them immediately. The school goes to good lengths to ensure that pupils are treated equally. Discrimination of any form is not tolerated. Racist incidents are few, and parents and carers are always involved in resolving any that do arise.
- Swearing in the playground has been a problem in recent years, but this has been tackled very well by treating it as seriously as bullying. Anyone heard swearing is immediately given a 'red hand', similar to a red card in football, and sent to a senior member of staff. This has all but eliminated bad language.
- Attendance had been low for several years. It has now improved, although it is still below average. Some of the absence is caused by the way that the school keeps pupils who are at risk of harm on its roll until they are securely enrolled in a new school.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the governing body is not fully effective and many of the new policies and procedures put into place by the headteacher since his arrival have not yet had time to have an impact on improved achievement. The school development plan sets out appropriate priorities but some, notably relating to behaviour, do not have measurable criteria against which their success can be judged.

- The school has improved steadily since it was last inspected. Good leadership has had a significant impact on behaviour; exclusions have fallen and attendance improved. Staff morale is good and parents and carers are happy with the school's performance.
 - Checks on teaching provide an accurate picture of its quality and all teachers are given clear areas for improvement. The school has forged strong links with others to provide training and allow teachers to observe examples of outstanding teaching. New systems for managing teachers' performance have been drawn up. These provide challenging targets and clear guidance on what a teacher needs to do in order to progress through the pay scales. Those previously not meeting their targets have not been promoted or received a pay increase.
 - Pupils are taught a broad and balanced range of subjects. Pupils enjoy the way that subjects are integrated in the afternoons, but the success of this approach has not been evaluated. There are relatively few opportunities for pupils to use role play or drama in lessons in order to improve their spoken English. The reward scheme for reading has been successful in encouraging pupils to read more often. Pupils develop a reasonable understanding of other faiths and cultures through trips and visits.
 - The local authority monitors the school's performance and provides appropriate support for the new senior leadership team.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance requires improvement because governors are not sufficiently well informed about the school's overall performance. They know what is being done to improve teaching and they manage teachers' performance and pay appropriately. Governors know how money is spent, including the pupils premium, but do not have a deep enough understanding of what impact such actions have on pupils' achievement. This leads to them thinking that the school is good and they do not challenge the headteacher and other senior leaders to demonstrate how quickly the school is improving. Governors ensure that statutory requirements are met. They pay particularly good attention to safeguarding matters, especially in tracking the whereabouts of pupils who leave the school when they suddenly move to a different area, and ensuring that the appropriate authorities follow up their concerns.
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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	103297
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	400605

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community School
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sylvia Dicker
Headteacher	Charles Chambers
Date of previous school inspection	9 November 2009
Telephone number	0121 4644302
Fax number	0121 4642811
Email address	enquiry@leyhill.bham.sch.uk

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