

Bedmond Village Primary and Nursery School

Meadow Way, Bedmond, Abbots Langley, WD5 0RD

Inspection dates 21–22 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 many lessons is too slow. Teachers do not always make full use of the school's accurate data on each pupil's progress to plan work at a suitable level for the range of ability in each class.
- Although teaching has improved recently, it is still not as good as it should be. It is not strong enough for all pupils to achieve well in all subjects.
- Not enough pupils are working above the expectations for their age, particularly in writing, and standards in writing are lower than in reading and mathematics.
- Not all subject leaders take an active enough role in observing teaching in their subjects and analysing data in order to ensure further improvements.
- Governors lack skills in the evaluation and analysis of school data and the governing body is not yet ensuring that all pupils make good progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The school has been through a difficult period since the last inspection but is now back on track and improving rapidly through the skilled leadership of the headteacher.
- Behaviour is good throughout the school.
- Provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good.
- Staff know and care deeply for all pupils. Rigorous procedures help to ensure that all pupils, including those who may be in disadvantaged circumstances, are able to make progress.
- Teaching and the care of the youngest children are good.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons, of which three were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings and discussions were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and its vice-chair, members of staff with responsibility for individual subjects, members of the local community, a representative of the local authority and groups of pupils, including the school council.
- The inspector took account of responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) by 30 parents and carers.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Clive Lewis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most other primary schools. Most pupils attending the school come from outside the immediate village locality.
- An above-average proportion of pupils join the school at other than the normal time, mid-year and mid-key stage. Of the 2012 Year 6 class of 18 pupils, 8 had joined the school in Key Stage 2, several in Years 5 and 6.
- The small year groups, the very high proportion of pupils joining late and the high numbers of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in some years make comparisons between key stages and year groups less meaningful than in larger schools.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average.
- Pupils are taught in six single- and mixed-age classes.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average and only a small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- A significant proportion of pupils come from Traveller and Gypsy/Roma communities.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average, and is particularly high in some year groups.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the overall quality of teaching to good and make it more consistent by ensuring:
 - all lessons proceed at a brisk pace
 - teachers make better use of school data to ensure there is an appropriate level of challenge for all age and ability groups within each class.
- Improve achievement in writing by:
 - devising ways to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills and use them to plan their writing
 - providing more opportunities for pupils, particularly more-able pupils, to use their writing skills in other subjects.
- Develop the roles of subject leaders by:
 - take a more active role in improving pupils' attainment and progress
 - ensuring that they are supported in their areas of responsibility.
- Improve governors' skills in evaluation and the analysis of data so that the governing body can more effectively hold the school to account for its performance and help direct its key decisions about priorities.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils do not make enough progress. Although improvements have been made, particularly in reading, standards of writing are not yet good enough and the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in writing remains below average. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are weak and are not used well to plan their writing. Despite some improvements, pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to use their writing skills in other subject areas.
- The overall progress of pupils who join the school at the start of their education and remain in school until they transfer to secondary school is in line with the national average. Those joining later are supported well and, in most instances, settle into the school quickly.
- Many children enter the school's Nursery and Reception class with skills that are well below those expected for their age. They make good progress in all areas of learning during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage, although their attainment remains below average when they enter Year 1, particularly in communication and language and number skills.
- In recent years the school's results in the national tests have fluctuated because of variations in the quality of teaching, small year groups and significant proportions of pupils joining in years 5 and 6, but have been broadly average overall. Although there are clear signs of improvements in the lower school, by the time pupils leave the school in Year 6 standards are not as high as they should be. The standard of work of pupils in the current Year 6 is a clear improvement on the previous year, and in line with expectations, although standards in writing are still not as high as in reading and mathematics.
- Regular, daily, activities in phonics (the links between letters and sounds) and guided reading help pupils to make good progress in reading from their starting points when they enter the school. Attainment in reading is in line with the national average by Year 6.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who are eligible for the pupil premium make similar progress to their peers. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress.
- Pupils from the Traveller and Gypsy/Roma communities make similar progress to their peers during their time in school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Despite the recent improvements in teaching, it is not yet good enough. There has not been enough time for pupils, who might have achieved more lower down the school, to make the accelerated progress that would allow them to achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- Where teaching has improved, for example in the teaching of reading, this is because teachers have received good training and support. The school's focus on improving literacy skills, with regular phonics and guided reading lessons, has improved pupils' reading skills considerably and is beginning to improve pupils' writing.
- The quality of teaching in writing still requires improvement, however. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are not yet sufficiently strong to allow them to write confidently when tasked with

producing a piece of writing. Their work is not yet at a high enough standard.

- In the best lessons, teaching is well-paced throughout the lesson and teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. They use a wide range of teaching methods and resources effectively to engage and maintain pupils' interest.
- In one mathematics lesson, pupils in Years 5 and 6 made good progress and enjoyed their learning as they calculated the perimeter and area of simple and complex shapes. The teacher made good links to pupils' previous learning and set appropriately challenging work for the different ability groups within the class. Pupils had regular opportunities to work together and discuss their ideas. They enjoyed the challenge and, as a result, pupils of all abilities made good progress.
- In the majority of lessons observed, however, teachers allowed the pace of learning to slow, often after a brisk start to the lesson. In addition, in a number of lessons, the teacher did not provide work that was targeted accurately at the different age and ability groups within each class.
- Pupils' books are marked regularly and, in most cases, the colour-coded whole-school marking system gives pupils good guidance on what they can do to improve their work.
- The school uses pupil premium funding appropriately by providing additional support for daily whole-school phonics and mathematics activities to help improve the attainment of identified pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils mix well with each other in the playgrounds and in the hall at lunchtimes. They are courteous and polite to visitors. They work well together in class and treat each other with respect and courtesy.
- Pupils are keen to do their best and answer questions readily. Their generally good attitudes mean that the behaviour of the vast majority of pupils is good in lessons. They display high levels of concentration and, when working in pairs or groups, organise themselves swiftly and without fuss. However, some minor off-task behaviour happens when the lesson moves at a slow pace or the level of challenge is not right.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school and say they are confident that any issue they raise with the school will be dealt with promptly and effectively. They have a good awareness of different types of bullying, recognise that 'little arguments in the playground aren't really bullying' and say that bullying doesn't happen at their school.
- The school's efforts to improve attendance have been successful and the attendance of the great majority of pupils is now firmly in line with the national average. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and pupils in Year 6 stated that they will be really sorry to leave the school in the summer.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. They are curious about the world around them and readily embrace new experiences, such as singing in St. Alban's Abbey, competing in 'Junior Apprentice' and serving at a 'Tudor Feast'.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Under the leadership of the headteacher there has been an increasingly successful focus on improving teaching and accelerating progress. Key strengths and areas for improvement have been identified, with the full support of the local authority. The school has systems in place to secure progression through the pay scales and teachers' performance is directly linked to key areas for improvement in the school development plan.
- However, leaders have not yet secured the same level of improvement in teaching and achievement, especially in writing. They have also not ensured that all subject leaders are sufficiently involved in improving standards in their subjects.
- The school has recently been through a period of significant changes in staffing and is now enjoying the benefits of a more stable situation. Staff are well motivated and demonstrate a shared sense of responsibility and commitment to improving the school.
- The school has introduced a more accurate assessment and tracking system, linked to termly meetings about pupils' progress. This is leading to improved progress across the school and significantly improved attendance.
- Teaching programmes are broad and balanced. Some improvements have been made in planning for the use of skills across subjects, but not enough has been done in respect of writing. Not enough opportunities are provided for extended writing in history, geography and science lessons.
- The school's leaders have used effectively the funding for those pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium. They have improved the staffing and other support for those pupils who receive it to help them achieve better results. An additional teacher is employed to work with these pupils to help improve their literacy and numeracy skills and the school provides a before-school reading club and an after-school homework club. These have had a significant impact on pupils' enthusiasm for reading and on their reading skills.
- Safeguarding systems are secure and rigorous. Discrimination is not tolerated. The school ensures all pupils have the same opportunities to succeed.
- The local authority has provided good support for the school and has helped it improve the accuracy of assessment and to raise the quality of teaching and attainment across the school.
- The school provides outstanding pastoral care for all its pupils. The small size of the school ensures that all pupils and families are known very well by staff. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable and those who may have had a history of problems in previous schools are warmly welcomed into the school and are particularly well cared for.
- Under the leadership of the headteacher, the school has developed very positive relationships with parents, carers and members of the local community. Its good links with a wide range of partners contribute significantly to improvements in pupils' achievement and well-being.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is supportive of the school but does not have a precise enough understanding of the school's work to be able to offer well-informed challenge, particularly in relation to pupils' achievement and the school's self-evaluation. Governors know about the

quality of teaching and what is being done to recognise and reward good teachers. The governing body ensures that safeguarding is secure and has overseen the arrangements for the use of the pupil premium funding and the arrangements for relating teachers' performance to pay effectively. It ensures that new governors are offered appropriate training opportunities.

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	117248
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	401657

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	133
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Richardson
Headteacher	Emma Woollon
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2010
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