

Millbrook Primary School

Grainger Drive, Leegomery, Telford, TF1 6UJ

Inspection dates 20–21 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

- The headteacher is not making sure that the quality of teaching is consistently good because he does not check the quality of teachers' work often enough.
- The headteacher does not know if all the actions taken to improve teaching are helping pupils to reach higher standards, particularly those supported by extra money provided by the government.
- Teachers responsible for English and mathematics do not do enough to make sure that all pupils achieve well in their subjects.
- The leadership of support for pupils who speak English as an additional language is not sharp enough to bring about rapid improvement in their ability to learn English.
- The teaching of reading and writing is not organised well enough to ensure that pupils learn as much as they can.

The school has the following strengths

- Attainment has steadily improved over the last three years. It has moved from very low to below average.
- Attendance has increased. Behaviour has improved, with fewer pupils excluded. Pupils say they feel safe.
- Pupils' wider education is promoted well through a range of subjects and visits to places of interest.
- Additional governors have helped the governing body to ask searching questions about the school's performance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups in 17 lessons and a series of short visits to classrooms and other activities such as withdrawal groups. The headteacher joined inspectors on a number of these visits.
- Meetings were held with senior staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, teachers, pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of three responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own parental survey conducted last term.
- The inspection team looked at a range of school documentation and information relating to teaching and learning, behaviour and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Jacqueline Wordsworth, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Linda Brown	Additional Inspector
Alwyne Jolly	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action plus, school action or a statement of special educational needs is higher than that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those who are looked after by the local authority and pupils with a parent in the armed forces, is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average. A number are at the early stages of learning to speak English and new to the country.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The headteacher was appointed in April 2010 and the deputy headteacher in September 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning so it is consistently good or better by making sure that teachers:
 - plan work for each pupil that is matched closely to what they already know and can do, particularly for those who are supported by extra funding or speak English as an additional language
 - check regularly how well pupils are learning during each lesson, so they can be moved on to harder work as soon as they are ready
 - demand high-quality work, and do not accept mediocre work from any pupil.
- Make sure every teacher plays a part in fully motivating pupils, raising their attainment and improving their behaviour by:
 - checking carefully how well all individuals and different groups of pupils are doing in the subject they are responsible for, particularly those who speak English as an additional language and those supported by additional funding from the government
 - teaching reading, particularly early reading, systematically and securely in all classes
 - developing their skills in how to teach and support pupils who speak English as an additional language more effectively.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers by:
 - making more frequent and regular checks on how well pupils are learning in each subject
 - checking that actions taken to improve the school are having the desired impact, particularly for pupils supported through extra government funding and those who speak English as an additional language
 - providing the governing body with much more detailed information about pupils' progress over time, the performance of teachers and whether the work done to improve teaching is making any difference, so that the governors can challenge the school to do better
 - making sure that all action plans contain clear targets against which the governors can check the impact of the school's work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and understanding that are well below those typical for children of their age. For many, skills in early reading and writing are very low. They make expected progress but standards remain well below average the end of Reception.
- Since 2010, Year 6 national test results show a gradual improvement in standards, with the steepest rate of improvement over the past year. Even so, pupils' attainment remains below average.
- The attainment and progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those for whom the school receives additional funding (the pupil premium) are similar to those of other pupils in the school in reading and writing; in mathematics they are lower.
- Pupils' progress is variable in different year groups. Most make the progress expected with a few doing better than that. Pupils do not routinely exceed the expected rate of progress because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, particularly in Year 4 where teaching is dull and work is not demanding enough. Progress in Years 5 and 6 is not as rapid as it could be, particularly because teachers do not give the most-able pupils hard enough work.
- In contrast, progress in Year 3 is brisk and pupils enjoy their lessons. One commented, 'I love maths, it makes me think hard.' They do well because the teachers successfully build on what pupils know and can do, and have a good understanding of how to teach mathematics.
- Almost all pupils who join the school partway through the year need extra help to learn English. These pupils and those who are more advanced in learning English do not make good enough progress, particularly in mathematics, because teachers do not plan work at the right level for them. Teachers and those responsible for organising support for them do not always ensure that they receive the right kind of help to learn well straight away.
- Pupils develop appropriate reading skills. They learn about the sounds that letters make but do not always use this knowledge to read unfamiliar words. Older pupils, especially those of middle and lower ability, say they do not enjoy reading and do not regularly read at home.
- Pupils have opportunities to write in different styles, such as letter writing and newspaper reports, but have too few opportunities to write at length or to use a range of more complex writing styles.
- Teachers and support staff do not correct errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar, so pupils continue to make the same mistakes. Some pupils have not developed a neat style of joined handwriting and not all teachers insist on good presentation, and so some pupils produce mediocre work.
- Progress is limited in mathematics because teachers do not focus enough on making sure pupils understand key ideas, use the correct mathematical terms or build their confidence in tackling mathematical problems.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Inconsistent teaching is a key factor preventing the school from moving pupils' achievement to good. In too many lessons, teachers do not take enough account of what the pupils already know and can do.
- Teachers sometimes do not make the best use of other adults to support pupils who find learning more difficult, including pupils who speak English as an additional language. In some lessons they give enough attention to checking the learning of these pupils.
- The teaching of the sounds that letters make and other reading lessons are not organised well enough to make sure that all pupils get the most of these sessions. Some teachers do not have the skills to teach early reading well enough. As a result, pupils do not develop a love of reading or have confidence in their ability to tackle new words.
- Teachers' planning, especially for writing tasks, does not focus well enough on developing key skills or ensure that each unit of work demands enough from older pupils. In particular, they do not have enough regular opportunities to tackle Level 5 work - this is work that is a year above what pupils are expected to attain at the end of Year 6.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of are not always high enough throughout the school. In several mixed-age classes, all pupils were given the same work to do. Those who find learning easy completed the tasks quickly and were not given harder work, while those who found the work more difficult struggled to complete it and lost interest.
- The better teaching was lively and easily captured and sustained pupils' interest. No time was wasted and lessons moved at a brisk pace. Teachers constantly checked pupils' understanding so that any misconceptions were quickly sorted out. As a result, pupils made good progress in their learning.
- Pupils usually have good opportunities to discuss their work in pairs and groups, and to report the results of their discussions to the rest of the class. For example, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, pupils' motivation was high and their progress good as they worked together to find different ways of solving number problems.
- Teachers in the Nursery and Reception classes provide a range of interesting activities, both indoors and outdoors, so that children are beginning to develop their social skills and self-confidence to try new things.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Relationships between adults and pupils are generally positive. Behaviour has improved in response to a range of strategies introduced by the school, although these and the quality of teaching are not yet effective enough to raise behaviour and safety to good levels.
- The school rules are well known and are followed without fuss. Parents and carers confirm that any misbehaviour is dealt with appropriately.
- Attendance and punctuality have improved since the previous inspection, although attendance remains average. Leaders have worked well with families whose children do not attend regularly. Consequently, fewer pupils are frequently absent.
- Pupils report that racist incidents do take place but are dealt with appropriately by staff.

However, some of the documents that record how such matters are resolved are not detailed enough to allow leaders to follow up any issues that may arise.

- The school's anti-bullying policy does not follow the most up-to-date guidance on how to tackle the main types of bullying. Therefore, pupils do not know when to seek advice on all risks that they might face, such as homophobic bullying. They do have a good understanding of such issues as cyber bullying and e-safety. Pupils report that they are confident that help is available, should they need it.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. Older pupils appreciate the opportunity to work as 'buddies' to younger children to sort out any minor difficulties they may have, and know when to refer problems to an adult.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher checks on the quality of teachers' work and pupils' progress, but not often enough or in enough depth. These checks place too much emphasis on what the teacher does, rather than the impact their teaching has on pupils' learning and progress. No follow-up visits are planned to check that areas for development for individual staff have been acted upon.
- In the past, teachers have been rewarded with increased pay even when their pupils have not made enough progress. The headteacher has strengthened this process and does not allow teachers to be rewarded unless they are successful in meeting their targets for improvement. However, these targets are not precise enough and as a result, some teachers are still being rewarded for mediocre work or performance.
- The headteacher and deputy have correctly identified the school's strengths and areas that require further improvement, but the targets in the resulting improvement plans are too vague and spread over too long a timescale to help the school to quickly become good.
- Leaders of subjects and other aspects, such as those responsible for looking after the work to support pupils who find learning difficult or who speak other languages, do not assess the impact of their work on pupils' learning and progress accurately or thoroughly enough.
- The information that teachers collect about pupils' attainment and progress is plentiful. It is analysed in detail to identify levels of achievement of year groups, but not for specific classes or different groups of pupils such as those who require extra help or for those for whom the school receives additional funding. Also, this information is not being used by teachers to plan their lessons or to set challenging targets.
- The school has used some of the additional funding it received for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals to release teachers from class to work with individual pupils and also to provide more adult support in class and to pay for school trips. Not enough has been done to check on how well these actions are improving pupils' attainment, or if they are providing good value for money.
- The local authority has taken a 'light touch' approach to supporting the school since September 2012. In the previous two years it gave good help and guidance to the headteacher, to improve governance and subject leadership, and to improve pupils' attainment from very low to below average.
- Richness is added to pupils' learning through a variety of experiences such as visits to theatres

and museums, and activities during school time such as music lessons. Pupils get the chance to use the skills they have learned in English and mathematics in other subjects, but sometimes these links are not planned well enough to result in good learning.

- The school does not do enough to welcome and celebrate the backgrounds of pupils who are new to the country. There are few examples of the pupils' home language around the school and little information in displays to raise other pupils' awareness of the countries that the pupils come from.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body checks the arrangements for safeguarding pupils well. Governors are involved in checking the school's work through drop-in visits to classrooms, and they ask challenging questions and make suggestions for improvement. However, the school is slow to act on these recommendations. For example, it has yet to respond to the recommendation to improve the teaching and organisation of early reading. Governors have an appropriate grasp of the school budget, but are not given enough information to make sure that the additional funding received from the government is always spent wisely. Some required policies are not based on the most up-to-date guidance. The Chair of the Governing Body is knowledgeable. She and the other governors challenge the school to improve. However, they are not always given the accurate and detailed information they need from the headteacher to enable them to hold him fully accountable for the school's work, especially in terms of teachers' performance and how well pupils are making progress compared to similar groups nationally.

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	134852
Local authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	402643

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	307
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Dorward
Headteacher	Martyn Lightwood
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2009
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