

# Langley Primary School

St Bernard's Road, Olton, Solihull, B92 7DJ

**Inspection dates** 27–28 November 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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

- Pupils' standards in writing are not high enough. The teaching of phonics (linking letters and sounds) to help improve pupils' writing skills is not as good as it should be.
- Although pupils reach average standards in reading by the end of Year 2, too few reach the higher levels in their work. This means that pupils of high ability could be doing better.
- A few teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement, especially in writing, are not high enough and so pupils only make adequate rather than good progress.
- Attainment in English and mathematics over recent years has been no higher than average. In 2012, attainment by the end of Year 2 was below average in writing and mathematics.
- Subject leaders other than those for English and mathematics, including the new leader in the Early Years Foundation Stage, are at an early stage of showing their effectiveness. Their impact on improving pupils' achievement has yet to be shown fully.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is taking a firm lead in driving change; a strong senior leadership team is in place to build further on improvements secured so far.
- By the end of Year 6 pupils making and exceeding expected progress in reading matches that made by pupils nationally. Pupils capable of achieving higher levels in mathematics do so.
- Teachers manage behaviour well, and do so consistently. Consequently, pupils' behaviour is good, in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils are well cared for and are kept safe.
- The actions taken by senior leaders and governors since the school was placed into special measures have led to measurable improvements. Pupils' achievement is no longer inadequate because of improvements made to teaching.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 22 lessons taught by 20 teachers. Five of these were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils' writing, mathematics and topic books. They heard a sample of pupils from each key stage read aloud.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils, governors and two local authority representatives. There were informal discussions with some parents and carers.
- Inspectors took account of 14 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's improvement plan, self-evaluation, safeguarding documentation and assessment data that teachers use to monitor pupils' progress.

## Inspection team

Dilip Kadodwala, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Heather Housden	Additional Inspector
Carol Worthington	Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.*

### Information about this school

- This is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises two Nursery classes and two Reception classes for four-year-olds.
- Around one half of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. Other pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds and the largest groups are represented by pupils of Indian and Pakistani heritages. A small number of pupils are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is similar to the national average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and children who have parents in the armed forces.
- The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to the national average (those supported by school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs). The main areas of additional need include moderate learning difficulties and behaviour, emotional and social difficulties.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has Healthy Schools status and is an Eco school.
- At the time of its previous full inspection in May 2011, the school was deemed to require special measures.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching so that all pupils make good or better progress and attain above-average standards in English, particularly in writing, by the end of Year 6 by:
  - making sure that every teacher has high expectations and does not accept mediocre work from any pupil
  - ensuring that activities challenge all ability groups, especially the more-able pupils
  - ensuring that the teaching of phonics is always precise so that pupils pronounce and write sounds accurately
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills across a wide range of subjects.
  
- Raise attainment to at least the national average in writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 by:
  - increasing the number of pupils who achieve the higher levels in the end of year national assessments
  - providing greater challenge to pupils capable of completing harder work so that they achieve their full potential.
  
- Accelerate the effectiveness of all subject leaders and leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage by ensuring that the training provided for them leads to good or better improvement to pupils' achievement, particularly in writing.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Children joining the Reception classes often do so with skills and abilities broadly in line with those typically seen for their age. As pupils move up the school, the progress they make varies too greatly, so that pupils' overall achievement requires improvement.
- Children's progress data across the Early Years Foundation Stage has not been reliable. This has improved because senior leaders have intervened to make changes to leadership and to more rigorously monitor teaching. These are helping to improve the rate at which learning takes place.
- Children are now making more rapid progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage than in previous years and an increasing number are reaching the standards expected for the start of Year 1.
- In 2012, pupils' standards by the end of Year 2 in reading were average but were below average in writing and mathematics. When pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 they usually achieve average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The amount of progress pupils make over time in different year groups is variable. In English, too few pupils exceed the expected rate of progress because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.
- The teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) in the Reception classes and in Years 1 and 2 is not consistently precise enough to enable pupils to make good progress. More of the higher ability pupils are capable of reaching higher levels in reading and writing than they are currently achieving.
- In mathematics, by the end of Year 6, most pupils make the expected progress and many make better than expected progress. This is because teaching over time is consistently good in Years 5 and 6.
- Most pupils speak well and clearly when explaining their work in lessons. Pupils are enthusiastic readers and most read widely. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make good use of phonics to help them read unfamiliar words.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is a key weakness in both key stages. It is improving faster in Key Stage 2, where the initiatives introduced by senior leaders over the last year are increasing the rate of pupils' progress.
- Governors have approved the use of pupil premium funding to buy in an extra member of staff to support small groups of pupils needing help, particularly in reading. This is helping to secure the progress of pupils supported by this funding. By the time they leave school, their progress is in line with all pupils nationally. In both English and mathematics, the gap in their attainment and that of pupils nationally is closing quickly.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who find learning difficult is better than all pupils nationally. This positive picture reflects the good use of one-to-one support, small-group work managed effectively by additional staff and good support in lessons for these pupils.
- Pupils from Indian and Pakistani backgrounds make progress that is similar to their White British

peers. The very few who are at an early stage of speaking English are supported well, particularly in reading.

### **The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has improved over time but still requires improvement because it is not yet consistently good in all lessons. This means that most pupils' progress over time is no better than adequate, leaving a lot of catching up to do in Years 5 and 6.
- In effective teaching, pupils are inspired and motivated so that they want to learn. For instance, Year 3 pupils were challenged and excited by poetry on the topic of bubbles. After an imaginative demonstration by the teacher, pupils' vocabulary and use of language was made richer. One said, 'Bubbles drift, float and sway.' This helped others to develop their ideas and then write their own good responses independently.
- Good use of questioning and checking of learning during lessons also helps pupils to make rapid progress. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, the use of these techniques made sure that pupils' understanding about subtraction was deepened through challenging problem-solving tasks which were pitched at the right level for all pupils.
- The good use of adults to support pupils who find learning difficult is a strength. It makes a significant contribution to these pupils' good progress because adults understand pupils' specific needs, work closely with class teachers to plan activities, and report on pupils' daily progress so that the next steps in learning are suitably carried out.
- Reading is promoted well through group guided-reading sessions and individual help for pupils who need it. The use of pupil premium funding to employ a teacher to spend time with small groups of the weakest readers is clearly improving their skills and confidence.
- Most of the marking is supportive and clearly shows pupils the steps they need to take to improve their work. The best marking is detailed and always follows up advice, so making sure that work improves consistently.
- Where teaching is not good enough, pupils sit on the carpet for too long because teachers take too much time explaining rather than letting pupils get on with their work. The result is that there is insufficient time for pupils to complete the activity planned.
- Other weaknesses include teachers' low expectations of what pupils can achieve, as some of the work set for them is too easy. This is especially true of the more-able pupils who are capable of being challenged further.
- The teaching of writing is recognised by leaders as a weakness and actions being taken to improve this are underway. More time is given over to improving pupils' punctuation and spellings. Pupils have not had enough opportunities to practise their writing in subjects other than English, although, increasingly, pupils are asked to write extended pieces in geography, for example. However, these approaches have not yet had time to have a major effect on the standard of pupils' written work.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Behaviour in lessons, in assemblies and around the school, including in the Early Years

Foundation Stage, is good.

- Teachers create a positive climate for learning. The behaviour policy, which was revised this year, is welcomed by pupils, parents and carers. Pupils like the rewards they get for good behaviour in lessons and in the playground.
- Disruptions to learning in lessons are uncommon. Most pupils have positive attitudes to work, even when the pace of learning slows in lessons that are not yet good enough.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are particularly engaging and interested in visitors. Pupils across the school are polite and well mannered, and there is a welcoming atmosphere throughout the school.
- All pupils spoken to had a good understanding of the different kinds of bullying, including cyber-bullying and racist comments. Pupils are sure that there is very little bullying and have the confidence to tell someone so that it gets sorted out quickly. Pupils say that they feel safe and have a keen sense of the risks involved in using social network websites.
- In the playground, pupils were seen playing happily together. They say that this is typical, now that previous unacceptable behaviour has been tackled effectively by staff. Some Year 6 pupils volunteer to play with Reception children and look after them; they all find this delightful.
- Parents and carers spoken to during the inspection agreed that behaviour has improved over time and that improvement in teaching is contributing to better pupils' progress. This was also mostly reflected in the small number of responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Surveys conducted by the school show that parents and carers are largely satisfied with the improvements made since the May 2011 inspection.
- Fixed-term exclusion rates have dropped significantly. Good provision and support when pupils return makes sure that repeated misbehaviour does not happen.
- Attendance has been average for the past two years. Pupils are punctual and ready to start learning because they follow well-established routines.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because not all subject leaders have shown their impact on raising pupils' achievement from adequate to good. This also includes leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Leaders have an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses, which inform the school improvement plan. Analysis of different groups of pupils' performance is used to set challenging targets. However, improvement planning has not been completely successful, as the needs of pupils capable of higher attainment are not met.
- The headteacher has done a great deal since the last full school inspection. He inspires staff, parents and pupils and is a very visible presence around the school. The recent appointment of the deputy headteacher is helping to develop effective partnership work and a can-do spirit. Staff are fully behind the drive to make further improvements.
- Staff are working together effectively and there is a clear sense of purpose which places pupils at the centre of the school's work. This is seen in the priorities agreed in the school

improvement plan, which come out of the evaluations carried out by senior leaders and governors.

- Leaders use performance management and training suitably to improve teaching. Leaders are determined that this is the key to improving pupils' achievement. Individual teachers' points for development are followed up by leaders' lesson observations and teachers' planning to check whether improvements are secure. In this way, teachers are held to account for their work. Rewards are directly linked to the progress made by pupils.
- The training has led to improvements in reading and mathematics, making good use of local authority consultants. This, along with regular observations of teaching by senior leaders, has helped to get rid of poor teaching and improve pupils' achievement from being inadequate by the time pupils leave school. This rigorous approach is now being given to the teaching of writing, where there is particular room for improvement.
- The school teaches a 'creative curriculum' that links different subjects together and identifies practical activities for the pupils. This enthuses pupils and enables them to gain the most of a variety of learning experiences. For example, Year 1 pupils' learning about 'living things' was enriched through a visit to a zoo. Pupils in Year 3 were fascinated by artefacts brought from a museum to help them learn about the ancient Egyptians.
- Out-of-school trips and visitors coming to share their experiences enliven learning and make a rich contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. A recent visit by three Olympians created quite a buzz; pupils were held in awe and reflected on the human capacity to achieve by striving to be the best.
- Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and show respect for each other, no matter which social, cultural or ethnic backgrounds they come from. They cooperate well in social areas and in lessons where they are asked to share and work together.
- Parents and carers are encouraged to support their children with their learning. Homework is set regularly and information is shared with parents, for example through newsletters and the school website. A parents' forum was set up after the last inspection and has proved to be a useful means of providing a 'talk shop' for discussing what is going well and what could be improved.
- The school works effectively in partnership with other schools and organisations. An initiative between Langley school and two other schools, including a special school, elects 'community councillors' to promote work in the local community. Pupils are proud of their contributions.
- The local authority stepped in to support the school quickly once it was judged to be failing. This has helped to strengthen the quality of senior leadership and teaching through coaching and well-directed support for improving reading and mathematics. The school is now mostly self-directing and less reliant on external support.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance has improved since it was judged to be inadequate at the last inspection. Governors have taken on appropriate training so that they better understand performance data and can compare how well Langley pupils do with the performance of pupils in schools nationally. The governing body now ensures that the school meets statutory requirements, including those relating to safeguarding and it makes sure that resources are used effectively and monitored regularly. This is seen in the school's spending of the pupil premium funding for pupils who are risk of underachieving, resulting in improvements in these pupils' reading



skills. The governing body ensures that pay for staff is linked to their effectiveness in the classroom. Governors are regular visitors to the school and gather first-hand knowledge, including about how well disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are achieving; taking part with local authority staff in looking at pupils' work; and asking senior leaders questions about the standards and progress made by different groups of pupils. Committee meetings are used well to discuss the details of findings gained from their own and leaders' monitoring of teaching, behaviour and safety. Through these activities and meetings, governors have good information and this enables them to contribute to school improvement planning and to setting a direction for the school so that it becomes better than it is currently.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104080
<b>Local authority</b>	Solihull
<b>Inspection number</b>	398976

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	436
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sean Hughes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Mitchell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 May 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 706 3932
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