

Blenheim Primary School and Nursery

Blenheim Road, Orpington, BR6 9BH

Inspection dates 29–30 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

- Pupils in Key Stage 2 are not yet making consistently good progress in English and mathematics. Some teachers' subject knowledge is insecure and work is not always pitched at the right level to help ensure all pupils make good progress, particularly the average and above-average pupils.
- There are some other inconsistencies in teaching that are prevalent in both Key Stage 1 and 2 that are preventing the current achievement of pupils being good.
- Some teachers do not always make best use of assessment data to plan and deliver lessons of high quality.
- Feedback given to pupils is inconsistent in its quality because areas for improvement are not always made clear or pupils are not given enough opportunities to respond to the comments.
- Newly appointed phase leaders, although they are members of the senior leadership team, are not yet rigorous enough in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning to bring about more rapid improvements.
- Suggestions or feedback for improvement for individual teachers are not always followed up quickly or rigorously enough.
- Governors, new to the school, require further training in understand their roles and responsibilities to effectively support the work of the school.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have high expectations for all pupils and are driving forwards improvements against a background of significant changes in staffing.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Progress over time has also been good in Key Stage 1, although it is not currently as rapid.
- Teaching assistants play an effective role in the school, at times, helping less able and other groups of pupils to make good strides in their learning.
- Pupils are well behaved and friendly and feel safe in school. Their attendance is above average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 12 lessons, of which two were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. The team also made eight short visits to lessons to observe pupils' behaviour.
- Meetings were held with the senior link adviser from the local authority and three members of the governing body. There were also discussions with pupils and staff.
- Inspectors considered parents' and carers' views of the school through discussions and the 10 responses to the online Parent View survey.
- The team examined a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation. They looked at attendance figures, pupils' work and records of behaviour, as well as documentation relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Janice Williams, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Andrew Lyons

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of one Nursery class and one Reception class.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for extra support through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for looked-after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children from service families, is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is well above the national average, with the majority from Black or Black British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportions of pupils supported through school action is in line with the national average. A similar picture is evident for pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school operates a breakfast club and other extended activities after school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been significant changes in teacher staffing in the school over the last two years.
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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils' achievement in English and mathematics, especially in Key Stage 2, is consistently good from year to year by:
 - monitoring pupils' learning more rigorously to ensure that they make good progress in all lessons
 - ensuring that pupils build their English and mathematical skills and understanding systematically and use and develop these skills across different subjects
 - ensuring that work in English and mathematics extends the abilities of the average and above-average pupils
 - ensuring that all teachers have up-to-date subject knowledge and the strategies for making lessons interesting and effective.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 and 2 so that it is at least consistently good by:
 - developing teachers' skills in analysing assessment data more effectively and using it to plan deliver lessons of high quality that are well matched to the differing abilities of pupils
 - improving the quality of the feedback given to pupils so that they know how well they are doing and how to improve their work.
- Strengthen leadership and management at all levels by:
 - setting clear targets for improvements in teaching and ensuring that they are swiftly and rigorously monitored to gauge their effectiveness
 - providing an effective support programme to develop teachers' subject knowledge where it

is insecure

- ensuring that phase leaders are used more effectively in the school to drive forward improvements in teaching and pupil achievement
- providing more support and training for governors so that they clearly know their roles and responsibilities and can better challenge senior leaders to ensure that pupils make good progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because progress has not been consistently good over time in Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics, particularly for the average and above-average pupils. Progress has been consistently good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Over time pupils have made good progress in Key Stage 1 but it is a little below this currently. Pupils' progress is variable from year to year because of inconsistencies in teaching and instability in staffing. The picture is now improving because of improved training, sharper monitoring by senior leaders and improved recruitment procedures. This is work in progress.
- Children enter the Nursery with knowledge and skill levels below expectations for their age. A high proportion of children are at the early stages of communicating in English and their social skills are not well developed. Teachers and support staff give good attention to children so that they develop their social and language skills. Consequently, children receive a high standard of challenge and support, which enables all groups of children to make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils join Reception from the Nursery and other settings. By the end of the year, all children make good progress, particularly in communication and language skills. By the time the children leave Reception, they catch up and enter Key Stage 1 with standards broadly similar to those of pupils in most other schools.
- Over the last three years, pupils' attainment in Key Stage 1 has been similar to the national average. As a result of good teaching over time, particularly in Year 2, pupils made good progress given their low starting points. In the 2012 (unvalidated) results, most pupils made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, with the exception of the average-ability pupils, who made outstanding progress in writing and mathematics. Pupils are currently making adequate progress as a result of changes in staffing.
- Over time, reading skills have developed well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 because of the systematic development of key skills. Progress in reading has been adequate at Key Stage 2 and many pupils leave the school as competent readers.
- Because of variable teaching and staffing instability, pupils in Key Stage 2 do not make enough good progress in English and mathematics. At the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in English is similar to the national average, and their attainment in mathematics in the 2012 test was a little below average. Lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work show that progress is improving at a faster rate than in the past but that work remains to be done to ensure that progress is consistently good. This is because there are inconsistencies in the security of teachers' subject knowledge that result in work not always being pitched at the right level to make learning more effective and systematic.
- Most pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding at Key Stage 2 make inconsistent progress in English and mathematics, ranging from adequate to excellent progress in different years groups. However, any underachievement is quickly identified by senior leaders and the funding is used to provide extra support so that pupil premium pupils attain similarly to their peers by the time that they leave school.
- Pupils from Black or Black British heritages make good progress in English and mathematics, with a few achieving outstanding progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make variable progress across Key Stage 2, with some pupils making better progress in English and few making slower progress in mathematics. However, with good support from teaching assistants, a notable number of pupils make good progress overall, given their starting points, by the time that they leave the school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is too variable, especially but not

exclusively in Key Stage 2. These inconsistencies centre on subject knowledge, on use of test and assessment data to plan and deliver appropriately challenging lessons, and variability in the quality and effectiveness of teacher feedback. Since September, the school has employed five new teachers, following staffing instability over the last two years.

- The most effective teaching occurs in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where it is good, with some that is outstanding. Teachers use the knowledge and assessment information that they gather on children to plan exciting activities that engage learners. As a result, all children make good progress week on week from their starting points.
- Currently the quality of teaching is too variable, especially but not just in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2. Although there are data about pupils' progress, they are not always used to best effect to plan lessons that match every pupil's needs. On occasions, the needs of different groups, particularly the average ability and the more able, are not planned for well enough to ensure continuously good progress.
- In some lessons, particularly at Key Stage 2, teachers do not have a detailed understanding of the materials they are teaching. They are sometimes unsure about the best way to teach the subject in an interesting, engaging and challenging manner. A training programme is in place to combat these shortcomings and the greater emphasis now being given to developing a stronger subject knowledge is beginning to bear fruit, but more still needs to be done.
- School leaders have accurately identified the need to ensure that there is a more systematic approach to the development of planned opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subject areas.
- Pupils' books are marked regularly. The best practice sees teachers providing clear pointers as to how well pupils are doing, what they need to do to improve and an expectation that pupils will take responsibility for acting on the suggestions. However, this good practice is not embedded in enough classrooms.
- Teaching assistants are often used effectively in lessons to support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and pupils supported by pupil premium. When this support is at its strongest teaching assistants ask challenging questions that make pupils reflect and work independently with very little guidance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is generally good in lessons, around the school and in assembly. At times it is excellent. For example, in an assembly, pupils listened eagerly and attentively and joined in enthusiastically in recognising and celebrating the achievements of other pupils.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and want to do well. When teaching is challenging and engaging, pupils are engrossed in their learning. Even when it is not at this level, pupils are generally compliant, although occasionally a minority go off task but are not disruptive.
- Pupils are confident and friendly. They take great pleasure in describing their time at school as being 'fun and safe'. The playgrounds are supervised well and the pupils spoken to during break and lunchtime have a clear understanding of the different types of bullying. They praise the school and say there is no bullying and are adamant that should it occur it would be dealt with immediately.
- In this inclusive community, there is a high level of respect for all staff and visitors. At lunchtimes, older pupils assume the role of 'Playground Pals'. Pupils proudly wear the bright yellow jumpers and summarise their roles as 'helping pupils to play well together' and as being 'second helpers' for staff to ensure that the playground is safe.
- The improvement in attendance has been a real strength of the school and enables more pupils to benefit from continuous education. As a result of a wide range of strategies involving both the pupils and their parents, pupils' attendance is now above the national average.
- Most of the parents interviewed and those who responded to the Parent View survey agreed that their children are well looked after, safe and behave well.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because teaching is too variable across the school. The instability in staffing has resulted in improvements being at a slower pace than planned. However, there is an urgency about how senior leaders are seeking to drive forward improvements and this is leading to the school being moved forward at a faster pace.
- The headteacher knows the school well and has accurately analysed its strengths and areas for development. Leaders have recently placed more emphasis on recruiting high quality staff to ensure that pupils make good or better progress.
- Issues from the last inspection have been addressed.
- Senior leaders monitor and evaluate teaching in an appropriate manner. They regularly observe lessons and carry out scrutinies of pupils' work and provide support for the large number of teachers that are new to the school. Teachers are increasingly held to account for the progress of the pupils they teach. Senior leaders provide feedback from all of these activities but targets for improvement are not always followed up with sufficient rigour to have the best and swiftest possible impact on improving teaching and student achievement.
- Although phase leaders regularly monitor teachers' plans and the work pupils do in their books, they do not play an active enough role in monitoring teaching and learning to help bring about more rapid improvement. In addition, the feedback they provide on pupils' progress in books lacks a cutting edge and clarity to pinpoint exactly what teachers need to do better.
- The school has worked closely with the local authority to provide training, in particular for Newly Qualified Teachers. Further training is planned for teachers to develop pupils' application of mathematical skills.
- The curriculum develops pupils' moral and social knowledge well through various discussions in lessons where pupils examine the lifestyles in different periods of time and compare them with theirs. Pupils also get the opportunity to go on trips which relate to a topic of study. The weekly assemblies develop pupils' spiritual awareness and create an inclusive environment where different cultures are celebrated and respected.
- The school ensures that all groups of pupils have equality of opportunity to make at least adequate progress in their learning; less able pupils are challenged by teaching assistants to work independently and pupils from Black or Black British heritages often make good progress. The school works effectively at tackling any form of discrimination.
- Leaders ensure that pupil premium funding is used appropriately to provide additional support in the classroom through dedicated support from teaching assistants with small-group reading, writing, numeracy and other interventions. The funding also provides extended clubs, in particular a well-attended and enjoyed breakfast club, and equipment for pupils. As a result, attendance has improved and pupils stay later at school to enjoy the extended activities.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors care about the school and are aware of how the school compares with other schools nationally. They praise the work of the headteacher and the friendly and caring atmosphere that she has worked hard to create. Governors are aware of the strategies used to hold staff to account for pupils' progress and the reasons for the headteacher increasing salaries to recruit more experienced staff to create continuity and improvement in the quality of teaching. Governors are aware of how the pupil premium funding is spent and accurately evaluate that pupils' attendance has increased because of the breakfast club, which creates a friendly and relaxing atmosphere. They are also aware that the progress of pupils supported through pupil premium is variable. Some governors are unsure about their roles and responsibilities in the school and require further training, especially in how to make more rigorous checks on the school's work and ensure that pupils make good progress. Governors have ensured that all safeguarding requirements are fully met.

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	134008
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	406555

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	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gerda Loosemore-Reppen
Headteacher	Alison Whiting
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 November 2010
Telephone number	01689 819955
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