

Banners Gate Primary School

Coppice View Road, Sutton Coldfield, B73 6UE

Inspection dates 15-16 January 2013

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| 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 standards reached at the end of Year 6 were low in 2012, particularly in mathematics.
- While progress is now improving strongly, pupils completing Year 6 in 2012 made inadequate progress.
- The teaching of the sounds that letters make is now improving, but the number of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 screening check in 2012 was too low.
- Teachers do not always plan work which is at the right level of difficulty so that the more-able pupils sometimes find work too easy.
- Teachers' marking does not always give pupils enough information about how to improve their work or move their learning on.
- The questions teachers ask are not always well thought out. They do not make pupils think hard enough or deepen their understanding.
- The large amount of information about pupil progress collected by the school is not always used by teachers in charge of subjects to raise achievement.
- Teachers in charge of subjects and the governing body do not make enough checks on the impact of planned actions to improve the school.
- The governing body does not always have a clear understanding of how well the school is doing.

The school has the following strengths

- The pace of progress is improving rapidly as a result of improving teaching.
- There are examples of outstanding teaching, particularly in Years 5 and 6, which are being used to improve teaching across the school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well and make good progress.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are enthusiastic about coming to school and their attitudes to learning are excellent.
- Pupils work and play safely and know how to keep themselves safe.
- Attendance is improving strongly as a result of the supportive work the school is doing with families.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons, of which one was a joint observation with the deputy head teacher. In addition, inspectors made other short visits to lessons and to learning areas to look at the work of the school. They also listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors took account of the 12 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke informally to parents and carers as they brought their children to school.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, a representative from the local authority, governors, senior and middle leaders, and teaching staff.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school, and looked at pupils' books and at a number of documents, including the school's own information and checks of how well pupils are doing. They also checked planning documents, record of checks on the quality of teaching, and records of behaviour, attendance and punctuality, as well as documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

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|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| Simon Blackburn, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Denise Dalton | Additional Inspector |
| Rosemary Barnfield | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is almost double the national average.
- The large majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school runs a wrap-around-care facility at the beginning and end of the day.
- The school was formed from the amalgamation of the former Junior and Infant schools in September 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to good, especially in mathematics and in Key Stage 1, by ensuring that teachers:
 - give pupils work at the right level and take into account what they have already learned
 - give pupils the freedom to find things out for themselves, for example through solving problems
 - consistently give pupils information about how well they are doing and how they can improve their work to reach the next level of attainment
 - use searching questions that make pupils think hard and probe their understanding.
- Improve the teaching of the sounds that letters make so that the proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the Year 1 screening check at least matches the national average.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - making sure that all leaders and managers use the information produced by the school to check how well pupils are doing and to hold teachers to account for their performance.
 - developing the strength of the governing body in understanding information about pupils' performance
 - involving all staff and governors in carefully checking the impact of planned actions to improve the school on pupils' learning.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children start Nursery with knowledge and skills that are below those expected for their age. Their learning requires improvement in the Early Years Foundation Stage because they are only a little closer to where they are expected to be when they start Year 1.
- In 2012, attainment in Year 2 was below average. The proportion of Year 1 pupils reaching the expected standard in the letters and sounds screening check was also below average. Standards in Year 6 were low.
- The progress made by Year 6 in 2012 was inadequate. The progress being made by pupils currently in Year 6 is much better because teaching has improved as a result of staffing changes and training for teachers in new approaches to mathematics and English. These changes are having a positive effect on pupils' learning in most year groups, but there are still differences between classes and subjects in some year groups.
- Pupils enjoy reading and continue to read regularly into Year 6. The school adopts a consistent approach to the teaching of reading. Improvements have been made to the teaching of the sounds that letters make which has resulted in children showing good awareness of how to break words up and sound them out. The pupils' reading books are set at the right level.
- The school has detailed information about how well different groups and individuals are doing, and uses this to arrange programmes intended to help pupils learn more quickly. The impact of this support is not always considered carefully enough to give the school a clear idea of how effective it is.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium benefit from one-to-one support for individuals and additional support for groups. The school has employed a home-school link worker to support pupils and their families and improve attendance. As a result, gaps in attainment and progress are closing and in some year groups, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are making better progress than other pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making good progress as a result of well-targeted support.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school. Changes made following the 2012 test results are starting to have a positive effect on pupils' learning but the progress they are making is still too varied across year groups and subjects.
- The school has a clear approach to providing work that is set at the right level for pupils but it is not always applied successfully in all classes.
- In some lessons, the teaching is too rigid and uniform so that pupils do not have enough chance to make decisions about their learning. Where pupils are given options and time to find things out for themselves they make rapid progress. In an outstanding Year 6 mathematics lesson, the pupils could choose the level of difficulty in a very demanding activity. All pupils made rapid progress as a result of the engaging approach to solving the problem.

- Pupils enjoy lessons and say that teachers make learning active and fun. They know their individual targets but are not always sure about how to take the next steps to reach them. The large majority of parents who responded to Parent View felt that their children are taught well.
- Learning in the wrap-around-care facility is well planned and responsive to pupils' needs and interests. Supervising adults assess progress and talk to teachers to provide extra information about the pupils' skills and knowledge.
- The quality of feedback given to pupils about their work varies. In Year 6, teachers give very detailed feedback about how pupils can improve their work and ask extra, demanding questions which the pupils then complete and comment on so that a conversation about the work takes place. This good approach is not found across the school.
- Teachers' use of questioning is also too uneven. In some classes, the questions asked are too simple and do not develop pupils' understanding well enough. In other classes, teachers ask more difficult questions of the more-able pupils and wait for answers, ready with other, even more probing questions.
- Teachers have generally good subject knowledge and the teaching of mathematics is improving, but the new methods of teaching mathematics, introduced recently, are not yet being put into action consistently so that the rate of pupils' progress varies from class to class.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy being at school and have a genuine enthusiasm for learning. This is clear from their improving attendance and punctuality, the excellent presentation of the work in their books and from their conversations with inspectors.
- Where lessons are interesting and well paced, pupils are fully engaged and show high levels of curiosity. Inspectors saw very few instances of unsettled behaviour and these only occurred when the pace of learning was too slow.
- Parents agree that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved and that their children feel safe. Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying and how to prevent it and they also say that bullying is very rare. School records confirm this. There is a system of peer mediators that the pupils feel works very well to solve minor problems between pupils.
- Pupils move calmly and purposefully about the school. They are extremely polite and courteous to visitors and show respect and compassion for one another. They say they are listened to and that the school council is a good way to make changes in the school and to get extra equipment for playtimes.
- Attendance was low last year but the appointment of a home-school link worker has had a positive impact and the work being done with families is helping to make sure that pupils attend more regularly.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The schools' leadership and management require improvement because actions taken have not been completely effective in improving the quality of education at the school. The leadership of teachers in charge of subjects is inconsistent. The school provides a great deal of information

about how pupils are doing but it is not always used effectively in all subjects or areas.

- More subject leaders are now involved in checking the quality of teaching and learning but practices are not consistent. For example, the school has a clear marking policy but inspectors did not see this used consistently across all subjects and year groups.
- The headteacher provides clear leadership and her vision for how she wants the school to be is increasingly shared by the school community. The amalgamation of two schools' staff and subsequent building work over the last eighteen months has required considerable additional work. Recent appointments to the leadership team have strengthened the leadership of the school.
- Plans to improve the school correctly identify what needs to be done. Actions are set out in a helpful way and expected to be completed on time. However, governors and teachers in charge of subjects are not routinely checking the impact of this work.
- There are many new elements to the way subjects are taught but it is clear that the pupils are enjoying their learning and the changes are having a positive effect on the pace of progress, especially in English and mathematics. Themed days are used to provide rich experiences for pupils, for example, a coronation was organised during the 2012 Jubilee celebrations which helped pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Similar themed days are used to make sure pupils understand each others' backgrounds and cultures, so encouraging good relations and tackling discrimination.
- Teachers report that the system for checking their performance and making decisions about their salaries is supportive and offers them opportunities for training to improve their skills. Inspectors found that checks on the quality of teaching are well organised and look at the right things, so that training that is recommended as a result is being effective in improving pupils' learning.
- Arrangements to safeguard pupils meet statutory requirements and are effective.
- The local authority offers good support to the school through the direct support of the school improvement advisor and through the support he brokers with local outstanding and improving schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors do not have a clear understanding of how well the school is doing. They are not clear on the areas of the school that are performing well and those that are lagging behind. This is because they do not have a full understanding of the information the school presents about pupils' attainment and progress. As a result, they are not in a strong position to ask school leaders searching questions about any underperformance. Governors are however very involved in the life of the school and give their time very generously, for example to support the themed learning days. They have a very good understanding of school finances and can account for the spending of pupil premium funding and are fully involved in decisions about how to spend it. Governors have a clear understanding of the link between the quality of teaching and pay and the targets being set by senior leaders to improve teaching.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 136815 |
| Local authority | Birmingham |
| Inspection number | 400290 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3-11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 375 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Tony Willis |
| Headteacher | Fleur Greaves |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Telephone number | 0121 464 7355 |
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