

Bradfield Church of England Primary School

Cock Lane, Southend, Bradfield, Reading, RG7 6HR

Inspection dates 11–12 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- The effectiveness of the school has declined significantly since the previous inspection.
- Pupils' achievement is inadequate because too much teaching is weak. Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. The management of teachers' performance has not helped teachers to improve their teaching.
- In Key Stage 2, not enough pupils make sufficient progress in English and mathematics. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is average in reading, writing and mathematics, which represents inadequate achievement from their starting points.
- Pupils' attainment is too low in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Progress is poor in Years 1 and 2, including in linking letters and sounds (phonics), because of weak teaching.
- In the Reception class, more-able pupils do not make enough progress because play activities are not organised sufficiently well to help them to learn.
- Senior leaders have not provided clear strategic leadership to bring about improvement. Leadership by other leaders is ineffective.
- Governors do not hold leaders to account for how well pupils are achieving. They do not have enough understanding of pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths.

- The new headteacher provides clear direction and is taking steps to raise achievement and improve teaching.
- Pupils behave well and their keenness to learn is shown by their good attendance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons, of which five were joint observations with the headteacher, and heard a sample of pupils read from Years 1 and 2.
- Inspectors had discussions with pupils, looked at a range of their work and examined the school's information about pupils' attainment and progress.
- Meetings were held with the Chair and other representatives of the governing body, senior and other leaders, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 63 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and of the small number of parents' letters to inspectors, as well as the responses to the questionnaire for staff.
- They observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including plans for improvement, safeguarding arrangements, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and records of school leaders' checking of teaching.

Inspection team

Eileen Chadwick, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Martin Budge

Additional inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- The school is a little smaller than most primary schools, although the number of pupils on roll has grown in recent years.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are similar to the national averages. These pupils' needs mainly relate to speech, language, literacy and numeracy difficulties and also to behavioural, emotional and social problems.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding, which is additional funding provided for looked after children, pupils eligible for free school meals and children from service families, is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A very small proportion of pupils has recently started to attend a specialist resource centre for pupils with language and literacy difficulties. This provision is for two hours a week and is based at a local primary school.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2012 after a long-standing headteacher left the school at the end of the summer term 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to good and eradicate inadequate teaching by:
 - improving teachers' subject knowledge
 - ensuring teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and ensuring they always set hard enough tasks for all pupils, including the most able
 - ensuring that lessons start promptly, lesson introductions are not overlong and pupils are moved quickly on to the main task
 - improving the teaching of phonics in Key Stage 1 and helping pupils to apply their knowledge of phonics when spelling.
- Ensure more pupils reach average and higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Reception, Year 2 and Year 6 by:
 - improving pupils' handwriting, punctuation and spelling and the way pupils present their work in books
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write longer pieces and to write for different purposes
 - giving the least-able pupils in Key Stage 1 opportunities to read every day
 - providing training for teachers to enhance their skills in teaching mathematics
 - ensuring play activities in the Reception class are purposeful and promote children's skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring all leaders and managers share high expectations for pupils' achievement and are more accountable for the school's performance
 - ensuring teachers who are in charge of subjects play a full part in checking pupils'

performance, raising achievement and improving teaching

- developing the curriculum so that teachers can teach the basic skills systematically, and so that it includes increased challenge for more-able pupils.

■ Improve the effectiveness of governance by ensuring governors:

- have a clearer understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, including the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils
 - challenge school leaders by holding them robustly to account for the school's performance
 - carefully check the school's performance and the impact of spending, including the pupil premium funding, on pupils' achievement
 - make sure teachers' pay is linked to the quality of their teaching.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Pupils' achievement throughout the school is inadequate because of weaknesses in teaching. Although children start school with skills and understanding that are above those typical of children of this age, their attainment by the end of Year 6 is average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportions reaching average and higher levels by the end of the Reception Year, Year 2 and Year 6 are too low, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils' progress in writing is weaker than in reading and too many pupils do not make enough progress. Pupils' handwriting is sometimes hard to read or not joined up. Work is too often untidy and punctuation haphazard. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write longer pieces of work or to write for different purposes.
- The teaching of mathematics is not strong enough to help pupils make good progress and to make up lost ground. In all year groups in Key Stage 2, too many pupils have not made enough progress in mathematics.
- Attainment at the end of Reception is average. Children's play lacks purpose and activities are not challenging enough for more-able children.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils are making poor progress and standards are low in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. The teaching of phonics (the links between letters and sounds) is weak; the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 showed that only a minority of the current Year 2 pupils achieved what is expected of them.
- Throughout the school, pupils' spelling is weak because teachers do not teach pupils to apply their phonics skills when spelling.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs sometimes make better progress when extra help is provided, including the very few pupils who attend the offsite centre for pupils with language and literacy difficulties. However, overall, their progress is insufficient because of weaknesses in provision for them in class lessons. The achievement of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is also inadequate and the gaps between the performance of these pupils and others are not narrowing.
- Lower-attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 are held back because their reading books are often too easy and not all are heard to read on a daily basis in school.
- Throughout the school, more-able pupils do not learn quickly enough because tasks do not challenge them sufficiently.
- Parents and carers have expressed concern about pupils' achievement. One quarter of those who completed Parent View did not believe that their children were making good progress and were concerned about the quality of teaching.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Very little teaching is effective and in half of the lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was inadequate.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. This means that tasks are not well matched to pupils' different abilities. Activities are often too easy, particularly for more-able pupils.
- The constant lack of challenge in Years 1 and 2 leads to particularly poor progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In Key Stage 2, pupils' progress is too uneven from one year to the next due to weaknesses in teaching in English or mathematics.
- Pupils' progress in learning letters and sounds is not checked and tracked across the school, which prevents teachers from planning work that builds securely on their previous skills. In Key Stage 1, the mispronunciation of some letter sounds by staff restricts pupils' learning.
- Too often, lessons are slow to start and much learning time is lost. Teachers' introductions are

frequently too long. This limits the time for pupils to work independently. Pupils' books contain too much uncompleted work and show that pupils have few opportunities for writing at length.

- The lack of a clear purpose in some lessons leads to pupils being unsure about what they are learning and not getting down to work quickly. Teachers do not consistently build pupils' skills within lessons and over time. This stems from weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge and in their use of assessment to match work to pupils' previous skills and learning.
- In Reception, there are insufficient opportunities for children to develop their literacy and mathematical skills through purposeful play.
- Teaching assistants make some effective contributions to the learning of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs through individual and small group support. However, their contribution during class work is restricted by the activities teachers provide for their pupils.
- Teachers' marking does not always help pupils to know what they need to do to improve and pupils are not aware of what they are working towards.
- In a very few classes teaching is more effective. In a good Year 6 writing lesson, for example, the teacher helped pupils to develop their ability to improve their skills well by asking them to check their own and other pupils' work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- School leaders successfully promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is an atmosphere of kindness and respect for one another in the school. The arts curriculum, including music, fosters pupils' spiritual awareness and sense of wonder.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They greet visitors politely and say they enjoy school. Pupils are courteous to one another during playtimes and in classrooms, and are well aware of the rules about behaviour.
- Pupils' keenness to learn is reflected in their good attendance. However, a few pupils are late because their parents do not ensure they arrive on time.
- Pupils are very keen to learn and thrive on challenge. However, when lessons are dull and repetitive, a few pupils begin to lose concentration and occasionally misbehave.
- Pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties are helped effectively to adjust to school. This means that lessons proceed with little interruption.
- Children in Reception settle well into school because of the good relationships with adults. They quickly develop independence and make sensible choices about what they will do.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for at school. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire agree that their children feel safe at school. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They know what action to take should bullying occur. The school has clear procedures for dealing with misbehaviour.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- The school has not moved forward since the previous inspection and pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching have declined. The new headteacher has accurately identified the school's strengths and weaknesses, including the need to raise expectations of pupils' achievement and to improve teaching. She has started to implement more rigorous systems for observing lessons, checking pupils' assessments and for holding teachers to account.
- The headteacher does not have sufficient support to improve the school rapidly because leadership at other levels is ineffective. Other leaders have recognised where pupils are underachieving and have provided extra help to enable pupils to catch up, but have not identified that the real need is to improve teaching rapidly.

- Until this term, there has been limited checking of teaching and teachers have not received enough guidance on how they can improve, therefore they have been underperforming.
 - Key subject leaders are not accountable for pupils' attainment and progress in their subjects and have limited impact. They do not check and support teaching across the school because of a lack of robust systems. For example, no member of staff has a specific responsibility to ensure that phonics is taught consistently and systematically throughout the school.
 - The headteacher has started to introduce clearer systems for checking staff's performance so that decisions about pay increases are linked closely to their responsibilities and performance. However, this is at an early stage and has yet to lead to improvements.
 - The curriculum is broad but does not help teachers to teach the basic skills systematically or ensure more-able pupils are consistently challenged. Consequently, the school's commitment to equality is ineffective because pupils of different abilities are not making sufficient progress.
 - Support from the local authority has been 'light touch', as the school was judged to be a good school. The local authority has not had enough impact on improving teaching across the whole school. There has been limited focus on improving teaching in Key Stage 1. Support has increased recently, which the headteacher is finding helpful. Governors have received help to set relevant performance targets for the new headteacher.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have insufficient understanding of pupils' achievement and, in the past, have had little information about how teachers' pay was linked to their teaching performance. They have not made the headteacher accountable for the performance of the school through robust targets linked to pay. Governors recognise they have accepted the school's view of itself too readily. They now understand the need to make rapid improvement in pupils' achievement and know they have not had enough training in evaluating information about pupils' attainment and progress. They understand how the pupil premium funding is being spent, but do not evaluate the impact of this spending on pupils' progress through the school. The governing body makes sure that safeguarding procedures and practices fully meet requirements. Governors have successfully led the school through an extended period of building. Premises are now very good and well suited to the school's size.
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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	110007
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	403104

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Bishop
Headteacher	Kathryn Simmons
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2008
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