

# Bleakhouse Junior School

Bleakhouse Road, Oldbury, B68 9DS

**Inspection dates** 17–18 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Over the last two years pupils' progress in English and mathematics has improved. Pupils now make good progress to meet broadly average standards.
- Teaching is now consistently good across all classes. Teachers make sure pupils are keen to learn because topics are always interesting and because teachers plan carefully for pupils with different levels of ability, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and in the playground. Pupils report they feel safe in school. Relationships between pupils and teachers and between pupils are good and pupils enjoy coming to school.
- Attendance is above average and rising.
- Leaders and managers have made good improvements in achievement since the last inspection by removing all inadequate teaching and improving all satisfactory teaching to good.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching.
- Marking is not always clear enough to help pupils to get to the next steps in their learning.
- Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to work independently in all subjects through practical tasks, or to learn without relying on the direct support from teachers.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all eight classes, including a joint observation with the headteacher and a joint observation with the deputy headteacher. A total of 13 lessons were observed including in the extra teaching group. Inspectors made short classroom visits to observe pupils at work and to look at pupils' books.
- Inspectors had discussions with representatives of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority, the headteacher, other members of the school leadership team, teachers, and three groups of pupils including the 'learning league' group. Inspectors also listened to pupils of different ages read.
- Inspectors looked at documents including past and current information about pupils' progress, including the school's pupil entry assessment data and pupil tracking information. Documents relating to behaviour, safeguarding, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, the school's own self-evaluation and school improvement plans were also read.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 17 parents recorded on Ofsted's Parent View online questionnaire and a single telephoned Parent View response. The 114 responses to the school's 2012 parent questionnaire were also considered and a number of parents were met informally at the start of the school day.
- The views expressed on 22 staff questionnaire returns were also considered.

## Inspection team

Kathryn Skan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Michael Appleby

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is of average size compared with similar schools nationally.
- The large majority of pupils come from White British families. None of the pupils are at an early stage of learning English.
- The percentage of pupils supported through school action is below average.
- The percentage of disabled pupils and those with special needs supported through school action plus or with a statement is above average.
- All pupils are educated on site. The school does not use alternative provision to support any of its pupils.
- The percentage of pupils supported through the government's extra funding for free school meals and looked after pupils (the pupil premium) is above average.
- A breakfast club is run by the school every morning. Clubs are also run after school.
- The school holds numerous awards including: Healthy Schools Platinum; National Healthy Schools; Activemark; Sandwell Inclusion Quality Mark; Basic Skills Quality Mark; Quality Mark in Extended Services; Quality in Extended Services (QES); Financial Management Standards in Schools (FMSiS); ICT Mark; Quality in Study Support (QiSS).
- The school exceeds the current floor standards, which set out the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

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

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching and thereby raise standards and rates of progress across the school by ensuring all teachers:
  - provide precise guidance to pupils in all subjects, both in lessons and through marking, that will help them move to the next steps in their learning
  - plan regular opportunities for pupils to work at exciting, practical tasks in all subjects
  - ensure pupils learn to work on their own and with others, without always relying on teachers' direct guidance, especially more-able pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- The school has consistently improved its performance over the last two years. Attainment of pupils is improving at a faster rate than is the case nationally. Pupils now reach broadly national standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. The number of more able pupils reaching the higher levels is rising fast but is still below average.
- Progress is good. The number of pupils now making and exceeding expected progress by the time they leave is improving. The school carefully analyses data on pupil performance to identify any child falling behind and to provide support. Improvements in writing have been particularly strong across the school. The school's increasing emphasis on requiring pupils to use their knowledge in investigations and to solve problems is similarly improving standards in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and pupils who have special educational needs also achieve well and make good progress in their learning. The school keeps a close eye on how they are doing and ensures they receive appropriate support that reflects their specific needs; this helps them catch up with others.
- The achievement of pupils who receive extra funding from the government's pupil premium is improving. Funding has been used to recruit an extra teacher and to provide extra support staff, specialist teaching resources and the funding of a full time learning mentor to those who need it. These measures are helping pupils to narrow the gap in attainment with their peers.
- Reading standards are good. Pupils have extensive opportunities to read widely and often. The school is keen to ensure its teaching programmes are inspiring. It takes great care to ensure the books used to support each of its themes are interesting and pupils are encouraged to read widely when researching topics. Books such as 'Outlaw' by Michael Morpurgo provide opportunities to make such things as bows and arrows and also provide good opportunities for dad's to become involved too.
- Computers, electronic tablets and other technological devices have also been used effectively to motivate and to improve learning. Pupils consequently gain secure basic skills and knowledge in reading, writing, communication and mathematics and are well prepared for secondary school.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is now consistently good across the school. Inadequate teaching has been eliminated and satisfactory teaching has been improved to good. This has contributed strongly to pupils making better progress in literacy and mathematics. Teachers have worked successfully in pairs to review and improve their work. This has helped to iron out inconsistencies in achievement from one class to another.
- Lessons are well planned, so that more-able pupils are given harder work and those who need extra help are given it. However, lessons are often too rigidly controlled by the teacher so that many pupils, including the most able, are not given the opportunity to think for themselves and learn without the teacher's direct instruction.
- Teachers monitor the progress of learning in lessons very well, adapting their teaching to reflect

pupils' understanding as the lesson progresses. They use questioning well in their teaching to make pupils think harder and promote learning.

- Support staff make a good contribution to all pupils' learning and support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs well.
- Teachers' marking is regular and invariably supportive but is not always linked sufficiently to the levels of the National Curriculum and does not consistently offer the kinds of precise guidance that would help pupils move to the next steps in their learning.
- Pupils are given appropriate amounts of homework and often enjoy homework tasks, particularly when these are linked to the books and topics they are learning about.

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

- Pupils take pride in their school and know its values well. The school has adopted the Olympic community values and pupils are invited to reflect on them as they recite them as a prayer.
- Relationships between pupils and their teachers are good and pupils like their teachers because they treat them with respect and as mature individuals. Pupils' attitudes to learning are consequently also good.
- Behaviour is good throughout the school and in lessons. Exclusions are below national averages. The school ensures all pupils are helped to achieve their best and those whose behaviour is particularly challenging receive outside agency support. The school does all it can to help all pupils succeed and rarely permanently excludes pupils.
- Bullying incidents are rare. The school takes appropriate action if any occur. A small minority of parents on Parents View felt the school does not deal effectively with bullying but the large majority are happy with how the school handles any such incidents. The school has carried out work with pupils to help them understand what bullying is and what different types of bullying are. Pupils interviewed during the inspection said they were not aware of any problems.
- Most pupils say they feel very safe in school and most parents on Parent View and the school's own survey agree. All replies on the staff questionnaire were positive on safety and governing body members interviewed during the inspection agree based on their regular health and safety checks. Most parents are satisfied with the school and would recommend it to another parent.
- Attendance rates have risen gradually over the last few years and are now above average. Pupils are rarely late for school because provision is made for them to enter the building early before register starts.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher provides good leadership and communicates high expectations to teachers and pupils. He is ambitious for the school and wants pupils to do well. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher, who has been instrumental in improving satisfactory teaching to good and in providing good leadership for teaching of pupils with special educational needs.
- Responsibility for leadership has been extended effectively across the senior team. All teachers

with leadership responsibilities have played an important role in improving achievement by pairing up in year bands to improve all teaching to good and by holding regular pupil progress meetings.

- Teaching is good as a result of an uncompromising drive to eradicate inadequate, and improve previously satisfactory, teaching. Monitoring procedures are rigorous and where improvements have been required, teachers have received the individual support and training they need. Good progress has been made in the previous inspection areas for development and the leadership unquestionably has the capacity to continue improving the school.
- The leadership team has improved standards in English and mathematics consistently over the last two years. This has been achieved by providing training for middle leaders in leadership and coaching skills so that these staff can support their colleagues in raising teaching standards more effectively.
- The school's teaching programmes provide stimulating opportunities for learning including for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Pupils enjoy two hours of physical education per week, often with specialist instructors. They have the opportunity to learn two languages, both French and Spanish. Pupils say they would like to do more art and making things but, overall, the wide range of experiences offered by the school helps contribute to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and ensures they are well prepared to live in socially diverse Britain.
- The school works well with parents. Various opportunities are provided for parents to come into school at various times during the school year sometimes including topic sessions. Transition arrangements for pupils coming to the school and leaving the school are good.
- The local authority knows the school well. It has provided strong support to make the necessary improvements over the two years, particularly in supporting the headteacher to eradicate inadequate teaching and helping develop the school's leadership. The local authority now regards the school as light touch and maintains a watching brief.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Since the previous inspection, the governing body has increased its involvement in school and become more effective in providing support and challenge to the leadership team. As a result, governors have a clearer understanding of pupils' achievement. They know what the school is doing to improve achievement, for example, but they do not always use data sufficiently to compare themselves with other schools. Governors check that the school's finances are used in a way that supports pupils' learning effectively and are well aware of how the extra government pupil premium money is being spent and the impact it is having on raising standards. The governing body uses information provided about teaching quality to inform decisions about staffing and staff training, ensuring pay is linked to performance and any underperformance addressed. They have ensured staff recruitment processes are safe by undertaking appropriate training, and all health and safety procedures are enforced through regular health and safety checks. The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust.

## 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>	103934
<b>Local authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	400673

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	233
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Anne Loxton
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Edmund Bates
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 December 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 4222841
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