

Bitham Brook Primary School

Arundell Close, Westbury, Wiltshire, BA13 3UA

Inspection dates 16—17 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress during their time in school and by the time they leave, they reach standards in English and mathematics which are significantly above those expected for their age.
- Pupils get on very well together and their behaviour is first rate. They are polite and helpful to each other and to all adults in the school. They have excellent relationships with their teachers so they come into lessons keen and ready to learn.
- Teachers give the pupils work which is at the right level, so it is not too difficult and not too easy. Pupils with special educational needs are given the extra help they need.
- Teachers use questions very well to help the children to explain their understanding.
- The headteacher and other leaders in the school understand clearly what the school is doing well and what needs to improve. As a result of the actions they are taking, teaching is improving and high standards are being maintained.
- Governors carry out their roles very well and understand how to make the school even better.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Though the learning in most lessons is good, sometimes teachers are so keen for the pupils to get things right that they stop them from having the chance to develop their independent learning skills by working on their own or in small groups.
- Teachers mark work carefully, so pupils know how well they have done, but they do not always tell the pupils how they could have done even better.
- The quality of teaching for children in Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1 and 2 about letters and the sounds they make (phonics) does not always enable them to make good progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons and parts of lessons.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other leaders in school, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and parents and pupils.
- The inspectors took account of 49 responses to the online survey (Parent View) as well as of the views of parents in the playground.
- School policies, assessment information, teachers' plans, pupils' work and information about how school leaders are finding out about how good the school is were examined, as well as the school's safeguarding procedures.
- The inspectors analysed 26 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Jeanne Simpson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Matthew Ingall	Additional Inspector
Jan Edwards	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Bitham Brook is slightly larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The headteacher was appointed to the school in September 2012 and the deputy headteacher joined in January 2013.
- Pupils are mainly White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action or school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly above average.
- The number of children joining the Reception class with special educational needs or with a home language other than English is increasing.
- A slightly lower than average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for the extra government funding known as the pupil premium.
- The school offers no alternative provision for pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum standards set for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - giving pupils a clear understanding, when marking their books, of what they need to do next in order to improve their work and time to act on the advice given
 - giving pupils more chances in lessons to develop their independent learning skills by working in small groups and on their own
 - ensuring that staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 have high-quality training so that the teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) is always of a high quality and pupils are enabled to make good progress in this area.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress and, by the time they leave, attain standards which are significantly above those expected for their age. However, the rate of their progress is not consistent for all pupils in all year groups. Leaders are very aware of this issue and are taking steps to make sure that all pupils make at least good progress in all year groups.
- Children begin school with skills slightly below those expected for their age. The school is taking action to meet the needs of the children who join the Reception class with special educational needs or with a home language other than English, through good use of specialist support. The learning experiences that children enjoy while in Reception enable them to make good progress so that they enter Year 1 slightly above the national average. The school is fully aware that boys have not been doing as well as girls and is taking decisive action to bring about the necessary improvements.
- This good progress continues during Key Stage 1 so that by the age of seven, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average and more pupils than could be expected reach the higher levels, particularly in reading and writing. However, in 2012, fewer pupils in Year 1 reached the required standard in the national phonics screening check than was found nationally, particularly boys. This is because there is insufficient discrete, regular and systematic teaching of phonics during pupils' first few years in school.
- Progress increasingly accelerates during Key Stage 2 so that by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, they are attaining standards which are significantly above those of their peers nationally. At the end of both key stages, there is no significant difference in the progress or attainment of boys and girls or those made in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils eligible for pupil premium funding, including those eligible for free school meals, consistently make better than expected progress and their attainment is in line with, or above, the national average point scores or those of similar pupils nationally. This is also true for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, due to the timely identification of their needs and the good support they are given. The school promotes equality of opportunity well.
- Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening because teachers give them many opportunities to discuss their ideas and their understanding, usually in pairs. During an assembly led by pupils from Years 5 and 6, exceptionally high standards of speaking and listening were evident. All pupils spoke clearly and confidently, sharing their learning about the Second World War, with an appropriate balance of humour and pathos. There was not a dry eye to be seen at the end, following the pupils' rendition of *The White Cliffs of Dover*.

The quality of teaching is good

- The good quality of teaching is founded in the excellent relationships between the pupils and between pupils and adults. Pupils really like their teachers and they come to lessons ready to enjoy their learning. As one pupil said, 'Our teacher gets things into our head without us really realising!'
- Teachers use questioning well to check on pupils' understanding and, in the best lessons, teachers use the answers to assess pupils' understanding and adapt their teaching if necessary. However, sometimes teachers intervene too quickly and insufficient time is given for pupils to extend their answers or comment on each other's ideas. Pupils are not always given enough opportunities to plan and organise their own work, or to work with others, which limits their opportunities to become effective independent learners.
- Teachers' understanding of the best way to teach phonics in Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 displays some weaknesses as they do not always model the sounds that letters make correctly for the pupils. Sometimes the pace of learning slows in these lessons and the

activities set do not enable the pupils to practise and apply their new learning.

- An effective system for collecting and analysing information about standards and progress has recently been introduced. Teachers are increasingly involved in analysing the data for their own classes and using the outcomes when planning their lessons so that the work set is appropriately challenging.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for the lower ability pupils, though in some lessons they spent too much time watching while the teacher is talking, rather than clarifying learning with pupils. They are skilled in delivering specialised programmes of support with small groups, which makes a very positive contribution to the progress of these pupils.
- Teachers mark work methodically and regularly. They consistently follow the school's marking policy and help pupils know how well they have done. However, they do not always help pupils to understand what they need to do next in order to improve their work and then give them time to put the suggestions into practice.
- Pupils are given many opportunities to apply their learning in English, mathematics and science in other subjects. This makes the learning meaningful and pupils report that they enjoy their work because it is interesting.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils have exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. They come to lessons ready to learn and are eager and attentive. They help each other when appropriate and no time is lost due to poor behaviour. When moving around the school, they are calm and orderly and show very good manners, opening and closing doors for adults and each other.
- Playtimes are opportunities for pupils to let off steam, but there is no wild or rough play and pupils cooperate well.
- Because of the excellent relationships and high expectations of behaviour, teachers are able to use humour in lessons and pupils join in the banter without overstepping the mark.
- Pupils feel safe because there is almost no racist name calling or bullying of any kind and, if it does happen, it is dealt with well. There have been no exclusions for more than two years. Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including when they are on the internet. Parents agree that pupils are very well behaved and the school makes sure that pupils are safe.
- The older pupils are proud to be chosen to be 'school seniors', a post which they have to apply for by letter. This gives them opportunities to take on responsibilities, such as helping younger pupils at lunchtime. This also contributes very well to their social development.
- The school takes positive steps to encourage high levels of attendance, including regular reminders in newsletters, and texts or phone calls to parents if pupils are absent without explanation. The parent support adviser works proactively with families to encourage regular attendance or to support them if they are going through challenging times.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have very quickly gained a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are well supported by other key leaders and governors, who share their drive to make Bitham Brook into an outstanding school.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are providing strong leadership of teaching and learning. There are regular checks on teachers' performance and clear guidance is given on what teachers need to do to improve their teaching. Data are used effectively to make sure that all pupils are achieving as well as they should. The school is part of a local cluster of schools, through which teachers are able to access high-quality training and this is already having an impact on the quality of teaching.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, and planning ensures that all pupils, including those in

mixed-age classes, have equality of opportunity. Pupils enjoy learning through the regular visitors to school and the visits they make to local places of interest. There is a wide variety of after-school clubs which are well attended by pupils. The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their social, emotional, spiritual and cultural skills through explicit opportunities in assembly, as well as through lessons. In a lesson about Guru Nanak, pupils showed great respect for other religions and were able to discuss their feelings in a mature way. There is strong link with a school in Zambia and teachers from both schools have visited each other.

- Parents spoken to unanimously appreciate the headteacher's presence in the playground before and after school, as well as his approachable manner. He has introduced Parents' Forum sessions, where parents can find out about what is happening in school as well as air any concerns. As a result, parents feel that they have a voice and all parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that the school is well led and managed.
- The local authority has an accurate view of the school's effectiveness and has provided good support, both before and during the transition to the new leadership team.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is highly effective. Governors are confident in using data to evaluate the school's performance to hold school leaders to account. They take up training opportunities and use their wide range of skills to very good effect, for example in checking the way in which the school's funding is spent, including the pupil premium allocation. Governors get to know the school well through regular visits and through conversations with teachers about specific aspects of the school's work. They have a clear understanding of what is good about the school, including the quality of teaching, how it could improve further and how it relates to teachers' pay. They use performance management effectively to focus on the areas where the school needs to improve and ensure that any weaknesses in teaching are addressed. Statutory requirements regarding safeguarding are met and all policies are regularly reviewed and updated so that there is great clarity about expected practice.

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	126291
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	46353

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	271
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Longley
Headteacher	David Ross
Date of previous school inspection	2–3 February 2011
Telephone number	01373 859172
Email address	head@bithambrook.wilts.sch.uk

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