

Olive Hill Primary School

Springfield Road, Halesowen, B62 8JZ

Inspection dates 23–24 January 2013

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		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- There is not enough good or better teaching for all pupils to make good progress each year.
- The pace of learning in writing, although improving, is not raising standards fast enough.
- Pupils are not always active enough in lessons and sometimes spend too long listening unnecessarily to their teachers.
- The work that teachers set is sometimes too easy for pupils. As a result, not all pupils make the progress of which they are capable.
- Many of the new systems the leadership team has introduced have not been working long enough to make a sustained and significant difference to pupils' learning and progress.
- Until very recently, checks on how well pupils were doing have not been robust enough to identify pupils who were underachieving.
- The recently introduced marking policy is not used consistently to improve pupils' work
- Attendance is below national levels. Punctuality for a small number of pupils is poor.
- Until recently the governing body has not asked searching enough questions of leaders about the school's performance.

The school has the following strengths

- Actions taken to raise standards are resulting in better achievement in reading and mathematics.
- The proportion of good and better teaching is increasing.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium make good progress because of the good-quality support they receive.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get a good start to their education.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and incidents of bullying are rare. Their behaviour has improved and they believe that they are treated fairly.
- The headteacher and assistant headteachers have been highly effective in leading the changes that have resulted in rapid improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement since their appointment.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 21 lessons involving 14 teachers, which included three joint observations with school leaders.
- Inspectors held discussions with school leaders, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including improvement plans, the systems for tracking pupils' progress, the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and samples of pupils' work. They heard groups of pupils read and spoke with others about behaviour and safety arrangements at the school.
- Inspectors took account of the seven responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the views expressed by those parents and carers who spoke with them at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Michael Bartleman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jenny Edginton

Additional Inspector

Enid Korn

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an above average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils come from a White British background.
- An increasing proportion of pupils come from an Asian background; the largest of which are from Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who start at the school speaking English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for specific groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals) is above average.
- No pupils are currently educated in alternative provision away from the school site.
- The governing body manages a before-school club each day.
- A private provider, Conkerz, runs after-school care. This was not part of the inspection and is subject to separate inspection and reporting arrangements.
- A Children's Centre, managed by the governing body, is attached to the school. This is inspected separately.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher and one assistant headteacher were appointed in January 2012 following a period of instability in leadership and several staff changes. Six new members of staff were appointed in September 2012

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all teaching is consistently good or better by:
 - teachers always setting work at the right level of difficulty for different groups of pupils
 - making sure pupils do not spend too long listening unnecessarily to teachers so that learning moves at a good pace
 - ensuring the marking policy is consistently applied so all pupils understand how to improve, and have time to respond to teachers' comments.
- Improve pupils' progress in writing by ensuring that:
 - activities in lessons help pupils to improve their spelling, punctuation, grammar and sentence construction
 - pupils have opportunities to write at length in a range of subjects
 - pupils throughout the school use good quality literacy, traditional tales and stories to stimulate their writing.
- Increase the effectiveness of leaders and managers by:
 - fully implementing plans designed to accelerate pupils' progress
 - extending the role of the governing body in holding leaders to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.

- By September 2013 raise attendance to national levels and substantially reduce the number of pupils who are late for school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement in writing is not improving fast enough and requires improvement. Many pupils lack confidence and skills in spelling, punctuation, grammar and sentence construction. Not all pupils have regular access to high quality literacy including traditional tales and books to stimulate their writing and develop their vocabulary effectively.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get a good start to their education. Most join the Nursery with skills and abilities which are below those expected for their age. They make good progress across all areas of learning and develop good levels of independence, although they start Year 1 still below levels expected, particularly in communication and language.
- Accelerated progress in Year 6 last year enabled attainment to be at expected levels in reading and mathematics with an increased number of pupils attaining the higher national curriculum levels. Gaps between groups of pupils are closing rapidly. Pupils are making more rapid progress across the school. However there are still pockets of underachievement in Years 3 to 5 with pupils not being moved on at a fast enough pace.
- Since the arrival of the new headteacher and the leadership team, a whole-school focus on raising attainment has begun to have an impact. More pupils currently in Year 2 are making good progress and are set to reach levels expected for their age by the end of the year.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic groups, including those who are learning to speak English, are making expected progress in line with their classmates.
- Pupil premium funding is used to provide additional teachers and teaching assistants, and access to enrichment activities. Pupils who are eligible for this support are currently making better progress than their peers. The gap in attainment between these pupils and other pupils has closed rapidly.
- Most pupils enjoy reading and achieve well. The recently introduced phonic lessons (the sounds that letters make) are having a beneficial impact on pupils learning English as an additional language and on all pupils' ability to tackle unknown words. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading is broadly average.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View or who spoke to inspectors during the inspection believed that their children were making good progress. Many referred to the changing attitudes in school and the improved attainment since the appointment of the new headteacher.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Over time teaching has not been consistently good enough to ensure most pupils make good progress in every year and requires improvement. The many staff changes and turbulence in school have made it difficult to continue to improve teaching.
- Expectations have not been high enough and in some lessons teachers still talk for too long leaving insufficient time for pupils to get on with their own work. Sometimes the work is too easy so that learning slows.
- Following the appointment of the new headteacher, teaching has improved as the result of effective staff training. An increasing number of lessons are good. Newly qualified teachers are well supported by the assistant headteachers.
- In the good lessons, teachers plan tasks that rapidly build on what the pupils are already able to do. All groups of pupils are fully engaged throughout and make rapid progress. Teachers use questioning well to find out what pupils know and build on this well. They use a wide range of imaginative activities that capture pupils' interests, such as when teaching drew on the overnight snowfall to inspire Year 5 pupils to write a set of instructions on how to build a snowman.
- Many teaching activities develop skills well across a range of subjects. For example, Year 6 pupils designed, built and produced written instructions and evaluations of air raid shelters as part of their Second World War topic.
- Although marking is encouraging it is inconsistent across the school and does not provide guidance that is precise enough to help all pupils improve their work. Often pupils do not have sufficient time to act on teachers' advice. Many pupils do not know their next steps in learning.
- Good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures there are ample opportunities for children to make decisions for themselves across a wide range of opportunities including outdoors, role play and writing activities. The team of adults works together very well.
- Reading is taught well. Teachers and teaching assistants are now successfully promoting the pupils' knowledge of the sounds that letters make although, at times, the pace of learning is too slow so not all pupils stay on task.
- Changes in the way mathematic is taught including the use of real examples from different subjects, have had a good impact on pupils' progress resulting in improved attainment in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2012.
- Teachers work closely with teaching assistants, who provide valuable support both in and out of the classroom. Pupils supported by the pupil premium, receive well managed support and make better progress than their classmates. Learning slows for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and more-able pupils when they are not provided with activities in class which challenge them or precisely meet their needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- Behaviour and safety are not yet good because not all pupils arrive on time to school and attendance, although improving, is below average. The behaviour of older pupils has improved but there are occasional lapses. The improving picture reflects the effective work of the learning mentor.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons and have positive attitudes to learning. They are polite and well mannered. At times their conduct is outstanding around school.
- Pupils' respect for adults and each other, and their clear understanding of how they are expected to behave, are strong features of lessons that enable most to proceed without disruption. Pupils say they like the rewards they get for good work and behaviour.
- School records confirm that pupils' behaviour has improved greatly since the appointment of the new headteacher, whose constant presence around the school and at the start and end of the school day is highly effective in cementing strong relationships.
- The school is very inclusive. Any discrimination is tackled with vigour and the promotion of equality of opportunity is good.
- Pupils are increasingly taking up roles of responsibility. The active school council is sharing ideas about improving the quality of playtimes and the school building.
- The school has close working relationships with a number of outside agencies including the attached Children's Centre to support pupils and their families whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable.
- Parents and carers said their children are safe and well cared for. This view is reflected in the confidence expressed by pupils that they are safe at school and that any bullying is dealt with effectively. Pupils have a good knowledge of all forms of bullying, for example cyber-bullying.
- Pupils are helped to develop a range of strategies so they are able to manage everyday risks for themselves, such as those associated with the internet, personal safety and fire.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Following instability in staffing and leadership which resulted in inconsistencies in teaching and underachievement, the recently appointed headteacher and her assistant headteachers have quickly implemented a range of robust and well-organised systems which resulted in improved standards in 2012.
- Working in close partnership with the new leadership team the governing body is beginning to ask searching questions about standards and monitoring the work of the school more rigorously.
- Work to bring about improvements in pupils' achievement is being consolidated by the leadership team. These higher expectations have inspired staff to make a real difference to standards reached. Staff morale is high and there is a common sense of purpose. These improvements show that the school has sufficient capacity for further improvements.
- Revised performance management procedures now hold teachers to account for their own pupils' progress, and support the drive for good or better teaching. Decisions about the salary

that each teacher receives are based on the progress made by the pupils in their care.

- Greatly improved systems now allow leaders to check rigorously the progress all pupils are making. The school improvement plan is focused clearly on gaining consistency in the teaching of English and mathematics and securing and sustaining good progress throughout the school.
- Regular lesson observations followed by detailed feedback to teachers and a successful programme of training have ensured that teaching is improving.
- The range of subjects and topics contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Lessons are enriched well through a wide range of after-school activities and by opportunities to take part in school productions such as Macbeth. Visits, including residential visits, and visitors to the school add interest and enjoyment. There are also opportunities for pupils to develop sporting and musical skills, such as whole-class guitar lessons.
- The local authority has provided good support for the new leadership and newly qualified teachers which resulted in improvements last year. The school works effectively with a range of schools in the local area, which provides opportunities for the moderation of work and for training.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors increasingly know their school well because they are in regular dialogue with the headteacher who shares data on pupil progress, quality of teacher and other improvements. All governors are attending training to improve their ability to hold the school to account although their knowledge of how the school's data compare with other schools nationally is weak. They are clear about the school's priorities for continued improvement.. The governing body has not monitored the work of the school effectively over time, but this is changing. They are prepared to tackle inadequate teaching and offer good support to the headteacher in sensitive issues. They have made good decisions on the rewards that teachers receive, the effective allocation of the school's finances and the newly organised support using the pupil premium, although they have yet to scrutinise the data in detail. The governing body carries out its statutory duties effectively, ensuring, for example, that procedures for safeguarding pupils are well managed, regularly reviewed and fully meet the regulatory requirements.

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	103796
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	404908

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	359
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Waseem Younis
Headteacher	Rachel Cutting
Date of previous school inspection	15 February 2011
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